WORKERS VANGUARD

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 927 | GCU C-701 | 2 January 2009

Defend the Palestinian People! Israel Out of the Occupied Territories!

Zionist Bloodbath in Gaza

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

DECEMBER 30—"Let it be known that in the 21st century this is happening while the whole world is watching but remains silent. I wonder how cheap Palestinian blood is," stated one Gaza resident (english.aljazcera.net, 28 December 2008). Nearly 370 Palestinians have been slaughtered since Israel began bombardment of the strip three days ago, more than 1,700 wounded. The first day of airstrikes produced the highest daily death toll in Gaza since Israel occupied it and the West Bank in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, with more than *one hundred tons of bombs* dropped on one of the most densely populated spots on earth. Israeli troops and tanks are ringing Gaza in preparation for a possible invasion, while defense minister Ehud Barak of the thoroughly bourgeois Labor Party has declared "all-out war." We stand for the ***military defense of Hamas against Israel*** without giving this reactionary fundamentalist outfit any political support.

Populated by 1.5 million Palestinians, Gaza is little more than a concentration camp—surrounded by an electrified fence, a sealed border with Egypt and the Mediterranean—under the thumb of a genocidal Zionist ruling class. Having been starved of food, fuel and medicine by a U.S.-Israeli blockade since Hamas took it over in 2007, much of Gaza is now little more than twisted metal and

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Reuters

Victim of Israeli bombing of Gaza City, 27 December. Some 370 Palestinians have been slaughtered so far.

Karl Marx Was Right

Capitalist Economic Crisis: Bosses Make Workers Pay

The following is an edited, expanded and updatrd version of a presentatiom by Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee membrr Joseph Seymour given at a rrcent plenum of thr International Executive Committee of the International Communist League.

On onc occasion a Dutch banker described conditions in the London stock exchange as resembling "nothing so much as if all the Lunatics had escaped out of the Madhouse at once." The occasion occurred almost three centuries ago, at the time when the so-called South Sea stock market bubble burst. So not all that much has really changed.

The current international financial meltdown and severe economic downturn began and is centered in the U.S. So, I want to begin by placing the crisis within the broader historical framework of the decades-long decline of American capitalism. However, it's useful to first consider the nature of bourgeois class consciousness, especially that of the American bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie is *not* a collectivist class. Both in their business practices and in the government policies they advocate, capitalists are primarily motivated by immediate self-interest, not some conception of the larger, long-term interests of the class. To be sure, the income and wealth of all individual capitalists derive from the total pool of surplus value generated by the exploitation of labor. But in their day-to-day activities, capitalists, especially financial capitalists, are mainly motivated by increasing their own wealth at the expense of other capitalists.

I've been reading this book, *Traders, Guns & Money: Knowns and Unknowns in the Dazzling World of Derivatives* (2006), by a veteran derivatives trader, Satyajit Das. It's very entertaining, really funny. At one point Das was working for an investment bank that was seeking to induce a Japanese pension fund manager to become its client:

> "The bank had courted him ceaselessly for years, to no avail. It turned out the fund manager had a weakness—a clichéd partiality for very tall, long-legged, blue-eyed, blonde women. The bank assumed the woman need not be Japanese.
>
> "A global search was undertaken and the human resources (HR) department performed admirably. The bank found a stereotypical Scandinavian woman to cover the fund manager. The woman—please don't laugh—was called Ulrika. She was bright, pleasant and efficient, but there was one problem—she had no knowledge of derivatives. She had a background in cosmetics. The bank hired her anyway, figuring, correctly it turned out, that the fund manager wasn't that interested in her derivatives."

Reading this book as a Marxist, what particularly struck me was that there was no discussion whatsoever about the division of social product between

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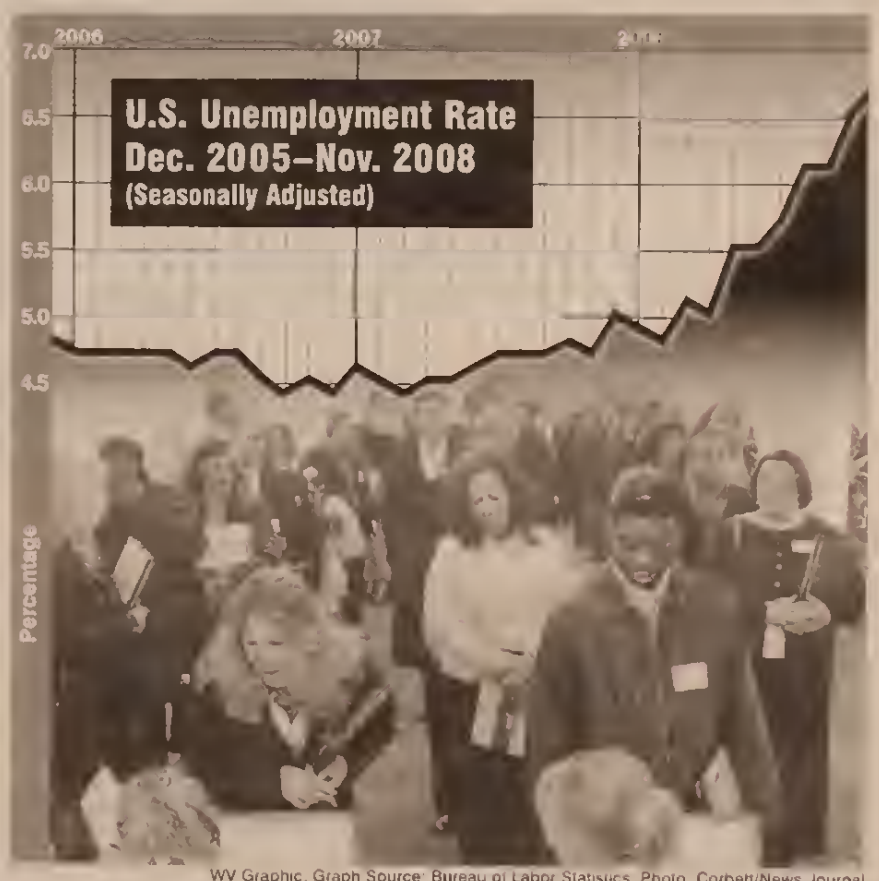

WV Graphic, Graph Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Photo: Corbett/News Journal

Rising unemployment, as hundreds line up at job fair in Delaware. Official U.S. unemployment rate is 6.7 percent and predicted to rise.

For Class Struggle Against Capitalist Rulers! Break with the Democrats! For a Workers Party!

D.A. Petitions Supreme Court to Reinstate Death Penalty

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Now!

On November 14, the Philadelphia district attorney's office filed papers with the United States Supreme Court seeking to reinstate the death sentence for Mumia Abu-Jamal. Since his youth in the Black Panther Party, Mumia, a MOVE supporter and eloquent journalist, has been targeted by the racist rulers because of his defense of the oppressed. He was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. For the next 27 years, the cops, prosecutors, bourgeois politicians and their media jackals have howled for Mumia's blood because they see in him the spectre of black revolt.

In its petition for a writ of *certiorari*, the D.A.'s office is calling on the Supreme Court to consider arguments for reversing the 27 March 2008 decision by a three-judge panel of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. That decision upheld an earlier ruling by federal district court judge William Yohn, who in December 2001 overturned Mumia's death sentence, citing faulty instructions to the jury during the penalty phase of the 1982 mockery of a trial. At the same time, Yohn upheld Mumia's frame-up conviction, a ruling also affirmed by the Third Circuit. On December 19, Mumia's attorney Robert Bryan also filed a petition asking the Court to hear arguments for overturning Mumia's conviction, focusing on racist jury-rigging; the prosecution used eleven of its 15 peremptory challenges to get rid of black jurors.

The Supreme Court accepts very few petitions. Should the neo-segregationist, pro-death penalty court of John Roberts, Antonin Scalia and Samuel Alito agree to hear the D.A.'s petition, it would be ominous, signaling that Mumia's death sentence could be reinstated in short order. If the Court turns down both petitions, Mumia would face the possibility of a new sentencing hearing, in which the only two options would be life in prison or another death sentence (see "Third Circuit Court Turns Down Appeal," *WV* No. 918, 1 August 2008).

Mumia's case demonstrates that there is no justice in the capitalist courts. Court after court has refused to consider the mountain of evidence proving his innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner. (See the PDC Fact Sheet pamphlet, *Big Lies in the Service of Legal Lynching*.) The courts, prisons and police exist to maintain, through organized violence and terror, the rule of the capitalists over working people. The same courts that have barred the evidence of Mumia's innocence have repeatedly discarded their own precedents and rules in favor of special "Mumia rules" to keep this "voice of the voiceless" in prison hell.

The Supreme Court has refused to hear four previous petitions by Mumia's attorneys. In 1990, the Court refused to consider a First Amendment challenge to the prosecution's use of Mumia's membership in the Black Panther Party as a basis for his death sentence. Shortly afterward, it overturned a death sentence of a white supremacist on the same First Amendment grounds because the prosecution told the jury of the man's membership in the Aryan Brotherhood. The Supreme Court also refused to hear Mumia's appeals in 1999, 2004 and this past October, when Mumia's attorneys presented evidence that critical witnesses lied under police coercion in his original frame-up trial (see "Supreme Court Bars Evidence of Innocence: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Now! There Is No Justice in the Capitalist Courts!" *WV* No. 922, 10 October 2008).

Since the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—and the SL took up Mumia's case in 1987, we have advocated pursuing all possible legal avenues. At the same time, we have always fought against any illusions in the courts of the capitalist class enemy. Our fight to free Mumia is based on a strategy of mass protest centered on the multiracial working class, which has the power to make the courts yield. As the PDC has always stated, "We place all our faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the 'justice' of the courts."

In the weeks following the March 2008 Third Circuit Court decision, the PDC and its fraternal international defense organizations held emergency protests and united-front demonstrations. These were exemplary actions that pointed to what is necessary to win Mumia's freedom: the mass mobilization of the working class independent of and in opposition to its capitalist class enemy—whether Democrat, Republican or Green. Over 500 organizations and individuals—including trade unionists, gay rights activists, leftists, black activists, death penalty abolitionists and others—endorsed the united-front protests called under the slogans: "Mumia Abu-Jamal Is Innocent! Free Mumia Now! Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!"

Our program of class-struggle defense is diametrically opposed to that of the liberals and reformists, who push the illusion that the courts can provide justice for Mumia. For years, these illusions have been codified in the subordination of the demand for Mumia's freedom to the call for a "new trial." This call has been promoted by the Workers World Party (WWP), International Socialist Organization (ISO), Socialist Action, the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal led by Pam Africa and the San Francisco Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal led by Socialist Action's Jeff Mackler—and has played a key part in the demobilization of what was once a mass movement.

After the Third Circuit's decision, WWP raised signs at Mumia rallies reading, "No execution! No Life Sentence: Free Mumia." But WWP has made clear that its goal, as well as that of the actions it has helped organize, is a "new trial" before the same courts of racist injustice.

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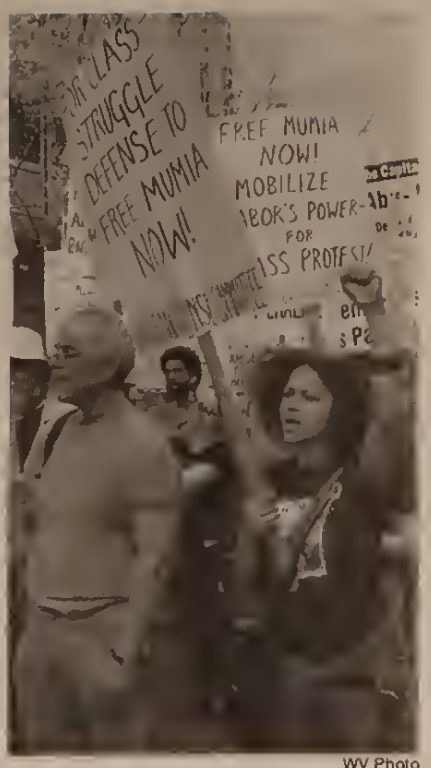

WV Photo

Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League's Class-Struggle Contingent at Philadelphia demonstration for Mumia Abu-Jamal, 19 April 2008.

TROTSKY

LENIN

Capitalism and Economic Crises

In the third volume of Capital*—published posthumously in 1894 by his close collaborator Friedrich Engels—Karl Marx explained how the capitalist credit system fuels economic crises, a prognosis which has been repeatedly borne out, not least by the current financial meltdown. In the excerpt below, Marx mentions John Law, a Scottish economist and financier whose Mississippi Company scam in the early 18th century fleeced wealthy French investors who were then bailed out by the government. Marx also notes Isaac Pereire, a financier in France whose Crédit Mobilier bank, which engaged in railroad speculation, failed in the mid 19th century. As Marx recognized, the only way to end the boom-bust cycles inherent to capitalism is for the working class to take control of the means of production through socialist revolution.*

The credit system appears as the main lever of over-production and over-speculation in commerce solely because the reproduction process, which is elastic by nature, is here forced to its extreme limits, and is so forced because a large part of the social capital is employed by people who do not own it and who consequently tackle things quite differently than the owner, who anxiously weighs the limitations of his private capital in so far as he handles it himself. This simply demonstrates the fact that the self-expansion of capital based on the contradictory nature of capitalist production permits an actual free development only up to a certain point, so that in fact it constitutes an immanent fetter and barrier to production, which are continually broken through by the credit system. Hence, the credit system accelerates the material development of the productive forces and the establishment of the world-market. It is the historical mission of the capitalist system of production to raise these material foundations of the new mode of production to a certain degree of perfection. At the same time credit accelerates the violent eruptions of this contradiction—crises—and thereby the elements of disintegration of the old mode of production.

The two characteristics immanent in the credit system are, on the one hand, to develop the incentive of capitalist production, enrichment through exploitation of the labour of others, to the purest and most colossal form of gambling and swindling, and to reduce more and more the number of the few who exploit the social wealth; on the other hand, to constitute the form of transition to a new mode of production. It is this ambiguous nature, which endows the principal spokesmen of credit from Law to Isaac Pereire with the pleasant character mixture of swindler and prophet.

—Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. III (1894)

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No. 927 **2 January 2009**

This pamphlet arms activists in the struggle for Mumia's freedom by presenting the political basis of the state vendetta against Mumia and the explosive evidence which completely destroys the more than two-decades-long frame-up of this eloquent fighter for black freedom.

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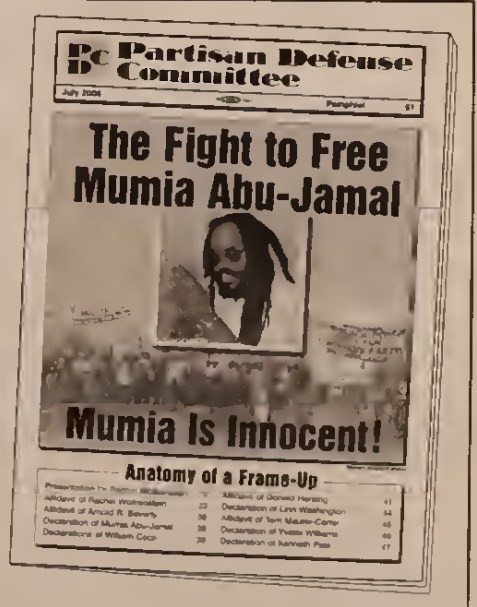


Republic Windows Plant Occupation

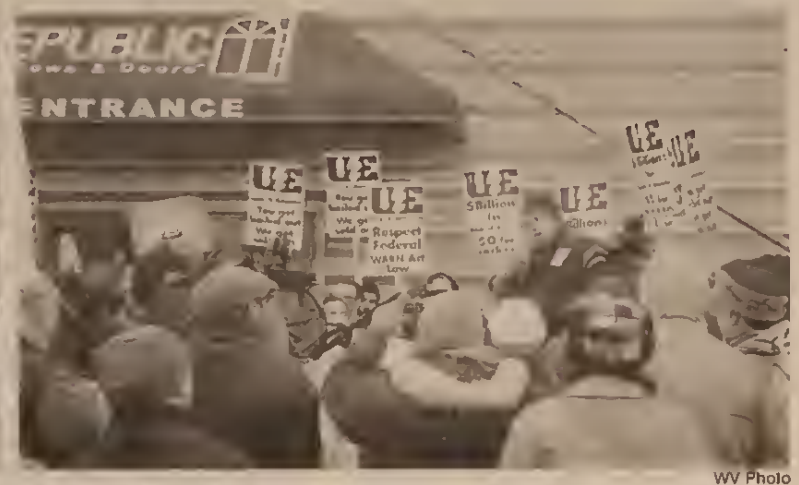
UE Workers Win Severance Pay

No Reliance on Democrats, Enemies of Labor! For a Class-Struggle Leadership of the Unions!

CHICAGO—"We're here, and we're not going anywhere until we get what's fair and what's ours," said one of the laid-off members of United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 1110 who occupied the Republic Windows & Doors factory on December 5. After a courageous six-day plant sit-in that captured the attention of the nation, these largely immigrant and black workers won their demands, forcing the bosses and their bankers to fork over $1.75 million in severance pay and benefits. By flouting the bosses' property rights, the victorious factory occupation set an example for all workers.

The factory occupation began after the Republic bosses gave three days' notice that the plant would be shut down, throwing its 260 union employees out of work, and then refused to pay severance benefits. The bosses tried to put the blame on Bank of America, which had cut off the company's credit line, but the union exposed the fact that Republic's owners were moving the plant's equipment and setting up a non-union shop in Iowa. When the bosses refused to negotiate severance pay, Local 1110 members gathered in the factory cafeteria, where they enthusiastically voted to occupy the plant.

AP



WV Photo

Left: Workers occupy Republic Windows plant in Chicago; sit-in lasted six days. Right: Rally outside plant in support of workers, 6 December 2008.

With the loss of *over one million jobs* in the U.S. in just the last three months and widespread anger at the government bailout of financial institutions like Bank of America, news of the Republic plant occupation struck a chord among working people from coast to coast. Hundreds of union members and officials from across the Midwest went to the factory, bringing donations of food and funds. Trade-union federations internationally, including France's CGT and Zenroren in Japan,

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Victory After 15-Year Battle

UFCW Organizes Smithfield Plant

North Carolina

In a major victory for all labor, workers at the Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, voted to unionize in mid-December. The fight to organize the 5,000 workers at the facility, the world's largest hog slaughterhouse, began over 15 years ago. To keep the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union out, the company has routinely fired union supporters and engaged in a wide-ranging campaign of coercion, intimidation and violence. At times, it has orchestrated its anti-union terror with the forces of the bosses' state, from local deputy sheriffs to federal immigration agents.

One of the biggest organizing successes in private industry in recent years, this victory in the least unionized state in the U.S. remains fragile and reversible. Workers face an ongoing battle to win a contract from Smithfield, which runs the plant like a plantation. In the past, the company has segregated black and Latino workers from each other and detained union activists in a jail cell *in the plant*. To this day, supervisors enforce a break-neck work pace and humiliate workers daily. With its stock price down more than 70 percent in recent months, Smithfield is even less likely to concede anything to the union without a fight.

FIRM

Smithfield workers and supporters rally in 2007 in Williamsburg, Virginia, at Smithfield shareholders' meeting.

A court-supervised settlement between Smithfield and the UFCW in October set up last month's vote. Under the settlement, the union agreed to end its "corporate campaign" designed to publicly embarrass and put financial pressure on Smithfield for its anti-labor practices; in turn the company dropped its RICO racketeering lawsuit against the union (see "Smithfield Plant: Smash Anti-Union RICO Suit!" *WV* No. 909, 29 February 2008). The agreement also set the terms for what the union and the company could legally do to make their cases to the workers in the lead-up to the representation election. Shortly after the results were announced, UFCW head Joseph Hansen declared: "We won because that [the settlement] gave us more of a level playing field."

In fact, the union did not get into the plant as the result of a "fair" legal process. Unions are built in struggle, not through ballots. With the UFCW tops tying up the organizing effort for years in the capitalist courts after failed representation elections in 1994 and 1997, workers began taking matters into their own hands. In 2003, workers on the plant sanitation crew walked out to protest wages and working conditions, winning concessions despite intimidation by company goons. Inspired by this action, workers stopped production to get the company to talk with them about health and safety concerns.

As immigrant rights protests swept the country in early 2006, Smithfield workers stayed off work, idling the Tar Heel plant on May Day. Six months later, when Smithfield fired 75 immigrant workers and threatened to fire hundreds more on the pretext that their Social Security numbers did not match government records, a two-day walkout that included black and white workers as well as Latinos forced the company to rehire everyone. Union supporters then collected 4,000 signatures demanding a paid holiday for Martin Luther King's birthday. When management spurned them, some 400 workers stayed off the job. In 2008, the company for the first time gave the holiday to workers at *all* its non-union plants. Nine days after the MLK Day protest in 2007, immigration authorities raided the plant and workers' homes, and another raid followed in August. The raids were carried out with the complicity of the company, which wanted to drive out union supporters. Since the start of 2007, more than 1,500 immigrant workers, most from Mexico, have been intimidated into leaving the plant, which is now 60 percent black.

If black and immigrant workers had not worked together, the organizing effort would have fallen apart. For years, management attempted to inflame racial and ethnic divisions. In the days before the election, union organizers had to combat widespread rumors that the National Labor Relations Board, which monitored the election, might ask workers to confirm their identities. The struggle for union recognition at Smithfield underlines that it is crucial for labor to fight against black oppression and to demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

The victory in Tar Heel could provide a springboard for organizing the open shop South, where "right to work" laws have historically been enforced by racist terror. The price of inaction can be seen in the growth of non-union plants in the South and other areas of the country where union power is weak to nonexistent. The refusal of the pro-capitalist tops of the United Auto Workers (UAW) to fight to organize the unorganized auto plants now threatens the very existence of the UAW, as the capitalists seek to destroy the union amid the current economic meltdown.

Revitalizing the labor movement in the South will require a level of class and social struggle that challenges the very foundations of the American bourgeois order, which is based on exploitation and racist oppression. But with their legalistic, pro-Democratic Party policies, the AFL-CIO and Change to Win officials are incapable of undertaking a militant mass organizing drive. What's needed is a fight for a new, class-struggle union leadership that will unleash the social power of the working class, beginning with the existing beachheads of integrated union power in the South. ■

Young Spartacus

Bettmann SDS

From Tepid Liberalism to Radicalism and Back Again

Chicago, October 1969: Tom Hayden addresses rally in Lincoln Park while on trial for organizing SDS protest against 1968 Democratic Party Convention. Right: Today's SDS promoting Obama victory in presidential election, Asheville, North Carolina.

A "new" Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), founded in 2006, has mushroomed on campuses across the country. This heterogeneous lash-up pounded the pavement to bring out voters for the Democratic Party (see "UCLA SDS Hitches Skateboard to Obama Bandwagon," p. 5), but it has also occupied military recruitment centers. Disdainful of "ideology" and dominated by hysterical liberal anti-Communists, the new SDS sticks together by shunning political debate in favor of "politically correct" platitudes about democracy. So, for example, SDS's voluminous "Who We Are" statement does not take a position on a single concrete political issue (studentsforademocraticsociety.org, 2007). Veterans of the early SDS, including Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers, Mark Rudd and Mike Klonsky, have rallied around the new SDS, giving talks and raising money, as well as holding their own tepid liberal protests and nostalgic conferences under the auspices of a refounded Movement for a Democratic Society.

So, what's in a name? SDS cofounder Pat Korte explained, "The reason we chose to keep the name SDS is because it accurately describes us (we are students for a democratic society)" ("The New SDS: Towards a Radical Youth Movement," *CounterPunch*, 10 July 2006). What being "for a democratic society" means in racist, capitalist America becomes clear from a look at SDSers' activities. Having gained some experience at the business end of a nightstick, the original SDS was known for its petty-bourgeois radical "off the pig" rhetoric—but the new SDS in Boston went on hunger strike in support of ***security guards*** at Harvard! Former *SDS News Bulletin* coeditor and UCLA SDS honcho Dave Shukla wants to braintrust the Feds, who witchhunted the first SDS, by "developing a model for mass participation and engagement with institutional design and policy formation for each agency and program in the federal government" ("Left Forum 2008 Speaker Bio," leftforum.org, undated). At Rutgers, SDS has taken up local New Jersey gerrymandering so "each [ward] gets to elect it's OWN Council person to represent their neighborhood" and "the student community will get the representation it deserves" (Tent State University/Students for a Democratic Society Facebook page, undated).

The institutions of bourgeois democracy are institutions of capitalist class rule with which the bourgeoisie dupes, defrauds and represses working people and the oppressed. SDS's pushing of "democratic models" diverts young activists into the dead end of bourgeois electoral politics. What unites the liberals in the new SDS with reformists of all varieties is the view that the capitalist system can be made to serve the interests of working people and the oppressed. As revolutionary Marxists, we seek to win youth to building a revolutionary workers party that can lead the working class in the struggle to overthrow the whole rotten capitalist system and lay the basis for an egalitarian, communist society.

Pushing the myth that communism destroyed the first SDS, the new SDS's leadership raises the spectre of "sectarian takeovers" and "totalitarian principles" in the service of liberal anti-communism. Voicing her opposition to members of the Maoist Freedom Road Socialist Organization being in SDS, New York SDS honcho Rachel Haut told *Platypus* magazine: "I think it is inappropriate to have conversations about ideological differences when we still have Maoists in the organization. Why should we be having these conversations with them, including them in the discussion; if their ideology is in direct opposition to building a democratic society?" (September 2008). Who needs the House Committee on Un-American Activities when you have the new SDS! The Workers World Party, Freedom Road Socialist Organization and other reformists work in SDS anyway, but this says less about SDS's "non-sectarianism" than about the reformists' toothless politics. They must feel right at home with the new SDS's parochial campus activism and Democratic Party lesser-evilism.

Forty years ago, Students for a Democratic Society played a prominent role in protests at the Chicago Democratic National Convention. The dirty, losing Vietnam War, initiated and escalated under Democratic Party presidents Kennedy and Johnson, was a burning issue. Most of the protesters in Chicago in 1968 opposed the Democratic Party as a capitalist party presiding over social injustice. As Kirkpatrick Sale described in *SDS*, his well-known history of the organization, SDSers rejected "as usual the idea of mass marches but [were] doubly scornful of any project mired in electoral politics." SDSers propagandized and organized actions against the Democratic Party and raised general hell in the city. For that, they were arrested, savagely beaten, and one young man was shot to death, all under the aegis of the Democratic Party city administration of the infamous Daley machine.

Last August, the new SDS mobilized for protests at the Democratic National Convention in Denver. They did so as part of the Alliance for Real Democracy, whose stated intention was "to convince and pressure Democrats to work for just and progressive policies at home and abroad" (realdemocracy2008.org, undated). Ostensibly more radical chapters of SDS, including the one from Grand Rapids, Michigan, stated in their call to action, "If we, as a radical movement, are going to attempt to pressure the Democratic Party candidates, the time to do so is before they are elected" ("SDS Call to Action: Disrupt the DNC," undated). The new SDS is a far cry from the iconic New Left organization of the 1960s, but the history of the old SDS sheds light on the new one.

Heirs of Stodgy Cold Warriors

While the first SDS emerged as part of a radicalization of U.S. society, the new SDS reflects a rightward social shift in a period of little struggle. Capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was a grave defeat for working people and the oppressed worldwide. It ushered in a period of bourgeois triumphalism over the "death of communism," in which social struggle has been limited and isolated. In their works *Empire* and *Multitude*, American academic Michael Hardt and his mentor, veteran Italian New Left intellectual Antonio Negri, developed on the bourgeois idea that communism has failed—an idea also embraced by the new SDS. As our article "*Empire*, *Multitude* and the 'Death of Communism': The Senile Dementia of Post-Marxism," noted:

> "Claiming to update Marx, Hardt and Negri jettison the programmatic core of Marxism: ***proletarian revolution to overthrow the capitalist system***. They dismiss the lessons distilled from the 1871 Paris Commune, the first proletarian insurrection, and the subsequent history of the revolutionary workers movement. They deride class war and proletarian power as 'old, tired and faded' notions....
>
> "In the late 1930s, following the victory of fascism in Germany and the defeat of the Spanish Revolution, Marxist revolutionary Leon Trotsky observed: 'As always during epochs of reaction and decay, quacks and charlatans appear on all sides, desirous of revising the whole course of revolutionary thought' (Transitional Program [1938]). The triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe in the early 1990s has nurtured a new generation of ideological quacks and charlatans. Hardt and Negri peddle their ideological wares to young leftists who, having no sense of the revolutionary capacity of the proletariat, accept the subjective outlook that a new world will be won not by uprooting the material reality of oppression but by changing the ideas in people's heads."
>
> —*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 59, Spring 2006

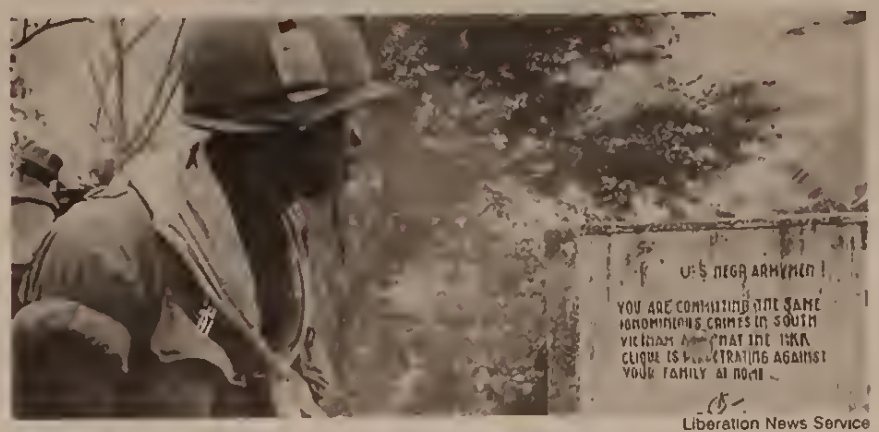
Dismissing communist revolution as a "failed experiment," today's SDSers are left with nothing more than the grubby politics of "lesser evil" capitalism. They are running the film of the first SDS's radicalization in reverse.

The new SDS's "democratic" and "anti-authoritarian" rhetoric recapitulates the Cold War anti-Communism that the first SDS broke from. SDS originated as the Student League for Industrial Democracy (SLID), the student affiliate of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID). Moribund by 1960, the LID had served as a handmaiden of the U.S. government in the left and the labor movement, peddling the virtues of "democratic," "anti-authoritarian" capitalism. Populated by "State Department socialists" such as Norman Thomas and Michael Harrington, the LID also counted among its members the labor traitors Victor and Walter Reuther, who rode to power in the United Auto Workers by purging Communists from the union in the

1940s, and Sidney Hook, a former Communist turned "god that failed" supporter of the established order. Hook was a leading light in the Congress for Cultural Freedom—a CIA-funded operation devoted to counteracting the appeal of Communism and the Soviet Union.

Despite posturing as champions of democracy in the Cold War, the U.S. imperialists supported right-wing military dictatorships, reactionary regimes and the remnants of European colonial rule around the world. On the home front, in the American South black people faced legal segregatinn and were deprived of basic rights—a fact publicized by the Soviet Union. The Southern Jim Crow system was based on police/Klan terror against atomized rural sharecroppers, and it had become increasingly anachronistic as industrialization in the American South during and following World War II drew blacks into the working class. By the mid 1950s, black anger at Jim Crow segregation had given birth to the civil rights movement, shattering the climate of Cold War McCarthyism and increasingly polarizing American society.

Seeking to refurbish its image and in response to early struggles, the U.S. capitalist class made some concessions, notably in the Supreme Court ruling *Brown v. Board of Education* that mandated the integration of public schools. But implementation of this ruling proceeded at a snail's pace. Young liberal activists, black and white, came forward courageously in lunch-counter sit-ins and freedom rides. Students from the North, defiant in the face of the murder of young civil rights militants, poured into the South to register black voters. In this changed climate, in January 1960 SLID changed its name to Students for a Democratic Society; its membership began to grow.



Liberation News Service

WV Photo

Vietnamese appeal to black servicemen during Vietnam War: "U.S. Negro Armymen! You are committing the same ignominious crimes in South Vietnam that the KKK clique is perpetrating against your family at home." Below: Spartacist banner at antiwar protest in Washington, D.C., January 1973.

Early SDS: Confronting Cold War Anti-Communism

The Cuban Revolution coincided with the civil rights movement, reinforcing the appeal of more radical ideas among young activists. In January 1959, Castro's rebel army overthrew the brutal, corrupt, U.S.-backed military dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. A petty-bourgeois nationalist, Castro formed a coalition government with venal local bourgeois forces and pledged to protect their interests. However, Castro's program of land redistribution and the measures taken against Batista's police torturers alienated Castro's Cuban bourgeois supporters and the U.S. imperialists, including Eisenhower's CIA director Allen Dulles and his brother, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, both major stockholders in the United Fruit Company. Eisenhower responded with brute economic pressure to bring Castro's regime to heel. This pushed Castro into the arms of the Soviet Union. By early 1961, the holdings of the National City Bank, United Fruit, Standard Oil, the sugar barons and the Mafia—as well as the Cuban bourgeoisie—had been expropriated, and the Cuban capitalists were either in exile or in prison.

Facing the unrelenting pressure of U.S. imperialism, the Castro government sought the protection of the Soviet Union. It was compelled under these circumstances to liquidate the bourgeoisie as a class, carrying out a social revolution. Cuba became a bureaucratically deformed workers state in which capitalism had been overthrown but political power was held by a parasitic bureaucratic caste fundamentally sharing the nationalist political program of "socialism in one country" with the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. In 1961, newly elected president Kennedy launched the Bay of Pigs invasion, attempting to overthrow the Cuban Revolution and establish a puppet regime. Leftist youth were inspired by the Cubans' defense of their revolution against U.S. imperialism. However, other guerrilla insurgencies aiming to overthrow right-wing capitalist regimes in Latin America were crushed with murderous repression.

In response to the Bay of Pigs invasion, SDSers posed the question "whether our foreign policy had really changed from its old imperialist ways" (*The Port Huron Statement of the Students for a Democratic Society*, July 1962). Early SDSers were increasingly at odds with the Cold War-era anti-Communism of their parent organization, which they rightly saw as a loyalty oath to the powers that be. The Port Huron Statement, adopted at SDS's June 1962 National Convention, sought "to oppose communism without contributing to the common fear of associations and public actions." It criticized the Cold War as "not sufficient for the creation of appropriate policies with which to relate to and counter communist movements in the world" and argued that "the American military respnnse has been more effective in deterring the growth of democracy than communism." A delegate of the Communist Progressive Youth Organizing Committee was allowed to attend the convention as an observer.

Even these small steps away from McCarthyism were too much for the LID elders, who hauled the SDS leadership into a trial for not being anti-Communist enough, then cut all funds to SDS and changed the locks on the SDS office. After much organizational wrangling, SDS and the LID patched things up. Although moving away from the dried-up LID social democrats, SDS had not fundamentally broken from lesser-evil Democratic Party pressure politics, drawing disaffected youth back into the two-party shell game and perpetuating illusions in bourgeois democracy. In the 1964 elections, a wing of SDS campaigned to go "part of the way with LBJ," maintaining that the Democratic Party platform was "superior to any passed by a major national party since the first New Deal" and that a victory by arch-conservative Barry Goldwater would spell disaster (Sale, *SDS*).

But the times, they were a-changin'. In 1964 at the University of California at Berkeley, the Free Speech Movement (FSM) broke out against the Berkeley administration's attempts to censor political life on campus by barring reds and other civil rights activists ("outside agitators") and restricting the activities of student organizations. Facing reprisals from both the liberal campus administration and Democratic governor Pat Brown, FSM activists defended their right to "hear any person speak in any open area of the campus at any time on any subject" (see "The Student Revolt at Berkeley," *Spartacist* No. 4, May-June 1965). The FSM's victory fueled further

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UCLA SDS Hitches Skateboard to Obama Bandwagon

On 3 November 2008—one day before the U.S. presidential elections—Stop McCain, Stop the War! (a new Students for a Democratic Society [SDS] working group) along with Freedom Road Socialist Organization and the Strategy Center of Los Angeles (the group behind the Bus Riders Union) held a rally on the UCLA campus under the call "Speak Out: No to the War! No to McCain! No on the Six [California ballot propositions]!" for the purpose of "going to the polls on November 4 and sending a resounding defeat to John McCain." This call to vote for the capitalist politician Barack Obama is but the latest and most explicit expression of the rad-lib SDS's pro-Democratic Party politics.

In our article "UCLA: 16 Arrested at SDS/SWF Protest—Drop the Charges! For Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All! Down With Racist Fee Hikes!" we laid out exactly what kind of a group SDS is:

> "SDS is a part of the radical liberal milieu that actively pushes 'anybody but Bush' politics. Their efforts are aimed at pressuring (through various means, including 'direct action') and boosting the electoral fortunes of the Democratic Party, which is the other capitalist party of racism and imperialist war. Indeed, when the SYC was distributing our defense letter defending those arrested for protesting fee hikes, SDSers told us that they were going to vote for Democrat Barack Obama in the upcoming presidential elections."
>
> —*WV* No. 918, 1 August 2008

When SDS organizer Babken DerGrigorian read our article he was furious; he claimed that these characterizations were slanders, insisted that SDS members are radicals and denied that any of their members were voting for Obama. But facts are stubborn things.

In the subsequent months, written arguments about why SDS should work in the Obama campaign have spilled from the pens of UCLA SDS's leading lights. Dave Shukla argued that "Our fellow students and youth are becoming more anti-militarist, anti-capitalist, and for economic democracy—without hardly even knowing it!.. SDS will miss this historic opportunity if we collectively ignore what the elections are already doing for our movements" ("Will SDS Miss the Boat? Engaging With Those Newly Politicized by the Elections is Crucial for Radical Movements," *SDS News Bulletin* No. 5, June/July 2008). Gurujiwan Khalsa followed up with, "A huge majority of people in this country are deeply concerned with the current state of affairs in it. Obama's candidacy happens to be the way that many are expressing that concern. We ought to plug into this groundswell. We ought to talk to them on their terms" ("What Is at Stake in the Coming Elections and What SDS Ought to Do About It," *SDS News Bulletin* No. 6, undated). Babken DerGrigorian certainly did not want to miss the boat—he dove into the groundswell, taking a job as a staff member for the Obama campaign!

The speeches at the rally argued that it was crucial to defeat McCain and Palin, the continuators of the Bush regime, as was, in the words of leading SDSer Eric Gardner, "holding the Obama administration to their antiwar promises." The claim that Obama made "antiwar promises" is patently false, as evidenced by his defense of American imperialist interests, such as his calls to increase troops in Afghanistan and his military threats against Iran and Pakistan.

The irony is, jumping headfirst onto the Obama bandwagon only netted SDS a headache—basically the only attendees at the demo were the organizers! People won't hobnob with Batman: the pro-Obama students didn't stay home—they were a little way down UCLA's Bruin Walk with the real deal, the Bruin Democrats.

We in the Spartacus Youth Club know campaigning for capitalist politicians only builds faith in the capitalist system. We stood in opposition to this rally for the Democratic wing of the bourgeoisie, selling *Workers Vanguard* with the front page headlining, "McCain, Obama: Class Enemies of Workers, Oppressed" and "Down With the Rotten Capitalist System! For a Workers Party to Fight for Socialist Revolution!" On the battlefield of class struggle, the SYC stands with the working class and for its historic task of international socialist revolution. SDS has proven time and time again, they stand with the capitalist camp and its current commander, Barack Obama.

SDS...

(continued from page 5)

student radicalization across the country and undermined illusions in the good offices of campus administrations and the Democratic Party.

Meanwhile, the escalation of the imperialist war in Vietnam meant more youth were being drafted, adding a direct material interest against American imperialist aims to the moral outrage felt by student activists. In 1965, SDS initiated the first nationwide protest against the Vietnam War. To many LID liberals, protesting a war against Communism was as bad as supporting the Communists outright. Furthermore, SDS's call for the march included no anti-Communist exclusion clause. With a rush of new members and continued radicalization, SDS would abolish its anti-Communist exclusion clause at its 1965 summer convention, and soon afterward it split from the LID entirely.

Radicalization: the Civil Rights Movement

When the civil rights movement spread to the North, fighters for black freedom confronted not Southern legal segregation, but the vicious inequality and racial oppression embedded in the American capitalist system. The struggle for fundamental change in the conditions of black life—for real equality, for jobs, decent housing and adequate schools—collided head-on with the realities of American capitalism. The Northern ghettos were exploding in protest. At the 1964 Democratic Party convention, the Johnson/Humphrey machine crushed the attempt by delegates from the anti-racist Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to unseat the Jim Crow Mississippi delegation.

The civil rights movement was fracturing as young militants broke from the Democratic Party and the liberal pacifism exemplified by Martin Luther King Jr., who said of the Watts ghetto upheaval, "It was necessary that as powerful a police force as possible be brought in to check them" (*New York Times*, 16 August 1965). As we wrote in "Black Power—Class Power":

> "In contrast to the reform program of the civil rights movement, the demands of the black masses are necessarily and inherently class demands, and demands which the ruling class cannot meet.... It is this transition which is represented by the black power slogan. Its popularization represents the repudiation of tokenism, liberal tutelage, reliance on the federal government, and the non-violent philosophy of moral suasion. In this sense, therefore, black power is class power, and should be supported by all socialist forces."
>
> —*Spartacist West* No. 8, 30 September 1966, reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised), September 1978

At the same time, we warned of the "black power" slogan, in the absence of a broader class fight:

> "It can be used by petty bourgeois black nationalist elements who want to slice the social cake along color rather than class lines and to promote reactionary color mysticism. More seriously, it can be degraded to mean mere support for black politicians operating within the system."

This was a prescient warning. As struggle ebbed, such was exactly the bill of goods sold to the black masses.

Co-optation was one weapon of the racist rulers; extermination was another. The best elements of radicalized black youth drawn to the Black Panther Party faced a systematic government campaign of assassination, police provocations, frame-ups and imprisonment, including through the FBI's notorious Counter-Intelligence Program. The Panthers' glorification of ghetto rage and rejection of the Marxist understanding of the role of the working class left them vulnerable to state repression. In the face of this repression, the Panthers turned to the right, into the orbit of the reformist Communist Party and its lawyers, as well as of the Democratic Party. (See "Rise and Fall of the Panthers: End of the Black Power Era," *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised], September 1978.)

Bettmann

Jackson, Mississippi, 1963: Civil rights activists sit in at lunch counter to protest Jim Crow segregation.

The Vietnam War

Today, the SDS of the second mobilization displays chauvinist support for the forces of U.S. imperialism. In a grotesque testament to "support our troops" patriotism, the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, chapter of SDS "collected and sent care packages to U.S. soldiers in Iraq and civilians in Iraq and Afghanistan. This is now going to be a monthly event..." (*SDS News Bulletin* No. 4, May/June 2008). The University of North Carolina-Asheville chapter set out white flags commemorating U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq together with shoes representing Iraqis killed under the American occupation ("UNCA SDS Iraq Body Count," *SDS News Bulletin* No. 1, October 2007). SDS's University of Chicago chapter has close relations with Platypus, an organization known for ***not*** opposing the occupation of Iraq (see "Platypus Group: Pseudo-Marxist, Pro-Imperialist, Academic Claptrap," *Workers Vanguard* No. 908, 15 February 2008).

We stand for the military defense of the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan against the brutal U.S. imperialist occupiers. As revolutionary Marxists, we side with oppressed countries against the predatory imperialist powers. But unlike in Iraq and Afghanistan, there was also another element at work during the Vietnam War: there was a socially progressive character to those who fought against the imperialist butchers. The heroic Vietnamese had carried out a social revolution, albeit bureaucratically deformed, overturning capitalism in the North, and they were fighting to extend this to the South. We demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. forces and called for the military defense of the National Liberation Front and North Vietnamese forces, raising revolutionary slogans, including "Victory for the Vietnamese Revolution...No negotiations!" and "All Indochina must go Communist!"

As U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War escalated, draft resistance spread among militant youth and SDS members. We oppose the draft, demanding "not one man, not one penny" for the imperialist military. But in the event of a draft, as we argued in "You Will Go!", adapted from a position paper we put forward in SDS, we oppose the voluntary purging of radicals from the army, which would only strengthen the ideological purity and political reliability of the army. Instead, we said young militants should go with the working-class and minority youth and continue their political agitation (see *Spartacist* No. 11, March-April 1968).

As opposition to the war grew, more and more young activists stopped chanting for "peace" and began calling for "Victory to the NLF!" As we explained in the founding document of our youth organization, *Youth, Class and Party* (adopted in 1971; reprinted as a pamphlet in December 1974):

> "When the liberal establishment backed the imperialist adventure in Vietnam, it drove the radical student movement to the left and opened the path to revolutionary politics.
>
> "As the Vietnam war drove the New Left away from the liberals, the New Left began to re-examine the 'Communist bloc' and came to identify with Stalinism in its 'militant Third World' form. New Lefters did not consciously identify with the legacy of Stalinism as embodied in the Soviet Union. Instead they created a false dichotomy between the conservatism and opportunism of Soviet Stalinism and the apparent militancy of 'Third World' Stalinist governments and leaderships like those of China, Cuba and the NLF."

Several variants of Maoism would attract a following in SDS. One was Progressive Labor Party (PL), a left split from the pro-Moscow Communist Party. PL put forward a crude working-class line against the blatant petty-bourgeois politics of Mike Klonsky's wing of SDS, the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM), which advanced a petty-bourgeois notion of sectoralist struggle, according to which the Vietnamese would fight for their liberation and independence, blacks in the U.S. for theirs, women for theirs, and so forth. By RYM's lights, the role of revolutionary-minded students was to act as propaganda bureaus and support groups for these various "vanguards." Ultimately, this sectoralism was just a "radical" version of standard ward-heeling-type Democratic Party constituency politics, with the working class relegated at best to another "oppressed" constituency rather than the agency for fundamental social change. Various Maoist outfits contended within and emerged from RYM, including what would become today's Revolutionary Communist Party.

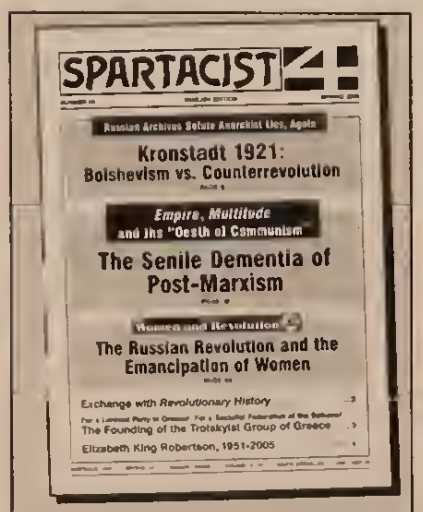
Maoism did not represent a break from Stalinist class collaboration, but rather "Khrushchevism under the gun" of U.S. imperialism. Seeking to win young radicals to a Trotskyist program, we exposed the Chinese Maoists' repeated attempts to form a reactionary, anti-Soviet bloc with U.S. imperialism at the expense of social struggles around the world. This alliance was sealed by Mao's 1972 meeting with U.S. war criminal Richard Nixon in Beijing as American warplanes rained death and destruction on Vietnam, and it eventually destroyed the Maoist movement for all intents and purposes within the "belly of the U.S. beast."

As we stated in *Youth, Class and Party*: "Only by replacing the Stalinist parties with parties unalterably committed to internationalism can the power of the Sino-Soviet states be used to further the struggle for world socialism. Recognizing that collectivized property and economic planning constitute a major qualitative gain for the workers in the Sino-Soviet states, we unconditionally defend these property forms against imperialist attacks and capitalist encroachment." Uniquely on the left, today we uphold the same Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense and proletarian political revolution for the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

Student Radicals in Search of Revolutionary Program

By the end of the spring of 1968, universities had been shut down and reopened, administration buildings occupied and then abandoned. This did not stop the Vietnam War—the government escalated troop deployments to Vietnam. Radical youth within SDS were becoming increasingly restive with student-centered politics. Clearly, there was a limit to "student power." The question was posed: if not students, then what force could bring social change? The French general strike of May 1968 gave an answer. This incipient workers revolution in France exposed the charlatanry of an earlier generation of "post-Marxist" ideologues such as Herbert Marcuse, who had written off the revolutionary potential of the working class. May '68 forced the New Left to confront the key question of class, laying the basis for new layers of youth to be won to revolutionary Marxism.

SDS's rejection of the "Old Left" was in large measure a response to the boring reformist politics of the Stalinist Communist Party, which had been deeply ensconced in Democratic Party politics



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Raul Corrales

Cuban soldiers during 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion. Heroic Cuban forces defeated Kennedy's attack on Cuban Revolution.

for decades and whose idea of black struggle was to follow the lead of the "respectable," religious black leaders. The most widely known self-styled Trotskyist organization at the time, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), was moving rapidly to the right when our founding cadres were expelled as a left-wing opposition in 1963-64. The SWP and its National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) gave Trotskyism a bad name as they promoted "peaceful, legal" single-issue antiwar peace crawls in order to make a reformist alliance with the defeatist wing of the U.S. bourgeoisie and social-democratic trade-union bureaucrats. The SWP's alliance with liberal imperialists was sealed in blood when Spartacist supporters along with PLers and SDSers were beaten and expelled from a 1971 NPAC conference for protesting the presence of ruling-class politician Vance Hartke on the platform. (See "The Vietnam Antiwar Movement and the National Peace Action Coalition," *WV* No. 920, 12 September 2008).

Our Trotskyist program won a hearing within SDS, and the forebear of today's Spartacus Youth Clubs was founded as the Revolutionary Marxist Caucus (RMC) in SDS in early 1970. The RMC sought to win radical-minded students to a revolutionary, internationalist and proletarian communist program. This included fighting for an understanding of the lessons of the Russian Revolution of 1917, the world's first successful workers revolution, which pulled Russia out of the bloody slaughter of World War I, expropriated the capitalist class, and placed Russia's economy under the control of democratic workers rule through soviets (workers councils). The RMC also sought to lay out Trotsky's understanding of the material roots of the bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian Revolution (see our pamphlet, *The Stalin School of Falsification Revisited*).

In the summer of 1969 at the SDS National Convention in Chicago, facing the prospect of Progressive Labor's positions gaining a majority, a clique within the SDS National Collective (NC), including Bernardine Dohrn and Mike Klonsky, engineered a split, lining up Black Panthers and others to race-bait PL supporters. When PL refused to take the bait, the NC splitters led their followers out of the conference. We remained with the PL-led Worker-Student Alliance (WSA) wing of SDS, based on its orientation, however crude, to the proletariat. But while PL correctly opposed the RYM splitters' sectoralism, it also advanced (as it continues to do) a line of indifference toward special oppression, for example, racial and sexual oppression. We fought for a proletarian orientation on this question—we issued position papers within SDS, arguing for a Leninist vanguard party to bring the power of the working class to bear in the interests of *all* the oppressed (see "'Racial Oppression and Working-Class Politics'," *WV* No. 897, 31 August 2007, and "'The Fight for Women's Liberation'." *WV* No. 910, 14 March 2008).

PL was vulnerable to our Trotskyist criticism, but ultimately they clung to their reformist "minimum/maximum program," combining "communist" rhetoric with reformist practice. We warned: "By attempting to build on social guilt, moralism, and empiricism, the three most obnoxious and defective characteristics of the American left, PL creates the conditions for its own defeat and the continuous splits to the right.... Without a clearly reasoned theoretical explanation for its break with Stalinist theory, without an institution of real inner party democracy, and without a transitional program which bridges the gap between 'rubber mats' [PL's concrete demands for workers struggle on campus were usually grotesquely minimal] and the dictatorship of the proletariat, PL is bound to create within itself right wing splits and transmit the same process to SDS" ("Final SDS Convention?", *Revolutionary Marxist Caucus Newsletter* No. 6, March 1971). Indeed, PL eventually "led" its WSA-SDS in retreat into outright liberal idealism, campus parochialism and ordinary reformism.

Terrorism and Communism

As we wrote in *Youth, Class and Party*:

> "The break-up of the New Left, most evident in the 1969 SDS split, was caused by the inadequacy of New Left politics in the face of the general social crisis of the late '60's. With the collapse of the traditional New Left, there remained three general political tendencies on the left. One is an attempt to re-establish the ties between the left and the liberal political establishment, now possible because of the deep split in the ruling class over the Vietnam war. The second is a policy of confrontation with the armed forces of the state and terrorism practiced in the name of Third World nationalism. The third tendency is that of proletarian socialism of which the Revolutionary Communist Youth is an important element."

Lacking a proletarian strategy, and desperate to *do something*, some in the RYM wing ended up in the Weather Underground. The Weathermen would conduct acts of individual terror that were self-defeating and, more times than not, far more dangerous to themselves than to the bourgeoisie. Such a program was no break from liberalism, but in fact a logical conclusion, in extremis, of the liberal program of bearing "moral witness" to the government's crimes. The Weathermen's strategy was futile; at the same time, their targets were representatives of imperialism and capitalist oppression. As comrade Trotsky wrote of a German youth who had assassinated a Nazi:

> "We Marxists consider the tactic of individual terror inexpedient in the tasks of the liberating struggle of the proletariat as well as oppressed nationalities. A single isolated hero cannot replace the masses. But we understand only too clearly the inevitability of such convulsive acts of despair and vengeance. All our emotions, all our sympathies are with the self-sacrificing avengers even though they have been unable to discover the correct road."
>
> —"For Grynszpan: Against Fascist Pogrom Gangs and Stalinist Scoundrels," February 1939

Berd Whitlock

Olympia, Washington, November 2007: SDSers and others delay shipment of military goods for use in Iraq occupation. Although such actions are courageous, SDS opposes Marxist political program necessary to defeat U.S. imperialism.

Helena Hermes

Paris, 29 May 1968: 800,000 workers at protest called by General Federation of Labor (CGT), led by the Communist Party. Prerevolutionary situation showed social power of working class, but was betrayed by Stalinist misleaders.

While politically in opposition to the Weathermen, we fought for their defense, insisting that they were "an integral part of the radical movement." We wrote:

> "The real crime vis-a-vis terror politics and heroic individualism is that it allows the revolutionary energies of some of the movement's most talented, dedicated people to be channeled into futile and self-destructive actions. It is our job to seek to redirect these energies into genuinely revolutionary directions."
>
> —"Terrorism and Communism," *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 17-18, August-September 1970

Other so-called "socialists" refused to defend the Weathermen and often even joined the witchhunting chorus against them. The Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party both denounced this small, isolated, and persecuted outfit of misguided radical youth. For its part, PL branded the Weathermen "police agents."

Although the new SDS is divided over whether the Weathermen were heroic, criminal or simply irrelevant, the Weathermen's politics have a pale echo in the new SDS's "acts of resistance" which, even at their most militant, lack both the social power and political program required to challenge the class rule of the capitalists. Like much of the "anti-globalization" movement, these protests are based on "the dangerously false idea that the capitalist U.S. is or could be pressured into being a democracy 'for the people' if only the anti-globalization youth were determined or creative enough to make the rulers pay attention.... Lacking a perspective of mobilizing the working class against the rule of capital, such confrontations with the cops amount to the streetfighting face of reformism" ("What Strategy to Defeat Imperialism?" *WV* No. 817, 9 January 2004).

In the Pacific Northwest, SDSers and others have repeatedly blocked military convoys, delaying shipments of war materiel to Iraq. These courageous protesters have been arrested, beaten and pepper-sprayed, but they lack the social power and political program needed to stop the U.S. imperialists' overwhelming military might. Despite our vast political differences, we revolutionary Marxist youth defend SDS when it runs afoul of the state (see "UCLA: 16 Arrested at SDS/SWF Protest—Drop the Charges! For Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All!" *WV* No. 918, 1 August 2008, and "Drop Charges Against Evergreen 6! Reinstate Olympia SDS!" *WV* No. 914, 9 May 2008).

SDS Today: Second Time Farce...

Once the U.S. had been defeated on the battlefield in Vietnam and mass protests had ended, many former SDSers reconciled themselves to the capitalist system. Tom Hayden, for example, went on to become a well-known California Democrat and state senator. Many other leading lights from the "generation of '68" went to work for Democratic Party mayors who oversee the oppression of the working class and oppressed in major urban centers. Former radicals also people the union bureaucracies and liberal civil liberties outfits, as well as the Democratic Party itself. Most recently, Tom Hayden, Carl Davidson and others got involved in Barack Obama's presidential campaign. Obama, having been vetted and approved by the ruling class, is about to assume the role of overseer of the whole plantation.

The Republicans had attempted to make electoral hay out of Obama's acquaintance with former Weather Underground member Bill Ayers, a luminary for many new SDSers. Chicago machine Democrat and mayor Richard M. Daley (whose father unleashed the police on the '68 protests) testified to Ayers' "rehabilitation": "This is 2008, people make mistakes. You judge a person by his whole life" (*New York Times*, 4 October 2008). It is also the case that a section of the ruling class will never forgive the likes of Ayers and Dohrn, no matter how "rehabilitated" they are by other sections of the bourgeoisie with whom they have made their peace. Even more vicious has been the continuing racist persecution of former Panthers, not least Mumia Abu-Jamal, America's foremost death row political prisoner (see "D.A. Petitions Supreme Court to Reinstate Death Penalty," p. 2). The racist rulers have long memories. Believe it: they seek to stamp out even the hint of the militant challenge, however politically flawed, which faced them during the social explosions in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Our model is not the confused, eclectic radicalism of the 1960s and early 1970s but rather the Bolsheviks who led the 1917 Russian Revolution. Alienated radical students have no social power per se; they can, however, be won to the fight for a revolutionary workers party, one that struggles for the political independence of the working class from all bourgeois parties and for workers' state power. Today the fight for revolutionary consciousness is surely an uphill battle, but a necessary one. There is a massive gulf between this understanding and that of the liberal politics, including their more "militant" face, of the present SDS.■

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Economic Crisis...

(continued from page 1)

wages and profits, or more broadly, surplus value, including rent and interest. The entire book was focused on the division of surplus value between financial and non-financial capitalists, and among competing groups of financial capitalists. It showed that for the most part capitalists are out to screw each other to the max. The politically decisive section of the bourgeoisie will subordinate their own immediate self-interest to what they see as the broader and longer-term interests of their class only when they feel sufficiently threatened by the working class from below or from hostile states from without. And when not, it's a Hobbesian world of all against all.

End of U.S. Post-World War II Economic Hegemony

Keeping that in mind, let's schematically view the postwar history of the American capitalist economy. For the first two decades following the Second World War, the U.S. dominated the world market in industrial products. It consistently ran very large balance of trade surpluses with almost all other capitalist countries. However, by the mid 1960s, West Germany and Japan had rebuilt and modernized their economies such that they could compete effectively with the U.S. in world markets, and also in the U.S. domestic market. So the flow of trade magnitudes was reversed. The U.S. began to run large balance of trade deficits.

Within a few years, this reversal destroyed the postwar international monetary system established at a conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, in 1944. This was called the gold-dollar exchange standard. The currencies of most important capitalist countries were fixed for long periods against one another and anchored by the dollar. Washington promised—and the emphasis here is on "promised"—that other governments could freely exchange all the dollars they had for gold at a rate of $35 an ounce.

By the beginning of the 1970s, that was no longer objectively possible. The volume of dollars held by foreign central banks far exceeded the U.S. stock of gold at $35 an ounce. The French government of Charles de Gaulle, who resented American international dominance and aspired to restore the "grandeur" of France, started exchanging its dollar holdings for gold. So in August 1971, U.S. president Richard Nixon closed the "gold window," ending the convertibility of the dollar into a universal commodity of intrinsic (labor) value. After a few ineffectual international conferences, what emerged was a non-system of fluctuating exchange rates. Since then currency exchange rates have been determined by market conditions modified by occasional government intervention. The reason I'm going into this is because the regime of fluctuating exchange rates had two long-term consequences, which underlay the present financial crisis.

One: it created a large new element of uncertainty, that is, risk of loss, in all international financial transactions, especially long-term financial transactions. Hence, currency exchange rates became a major sphere of financial speculation. A large part of Das's book on derivative trading discusses hedging against and speculating on changes in currency exchange rates.

Two: by severing the tie between the dollar and gold, American capitalism, at both the corporate and governmental level, has been able to massively increase its foreign debt, the only upper limit being the willingness of foreign governments and investors to hold dollar-denominated assets. The dollar is now worth only about *20 cents* in 1971 terms. This aspect of the current world crisis was recently underscored in a commentary by Richard Duncan in the London *Financial Times* (24 November 2008):

> "When Richard Nixon destroyed the Bretton Woods International Monetary System in 1971 by closing the 'gold window' at the Treasury, he severed the last link between dollars and gold. What followed was a spiralling proliferation of increasingly spurious credit instruments denominated in a debased currency. The most glaring and lethal example of this madness has been the growth of the unregulated derivatives market, which has ballooned in size to $600,000bn, the equivalent of almost $100,000 per person on Earth."

Increasing the Rate of Exploitation

In 1974-75, there was a major, very sharp world economic downturn. Though it didn't last long, it had important consequences especially in the U.S. Coming out of the economic downturn, the American capitalist class made a concerted effort to increase the rate of exploitation of the proletariat—that is, the ratio of surplus value to wages. They demanded, and got, give-back contracts and two-tier wages from the trade-union bureaucracy. They shifted production from the unionized Northeast and Midwest to the non-union South and Southwest and to low-wage countries in Latin America and Asia.

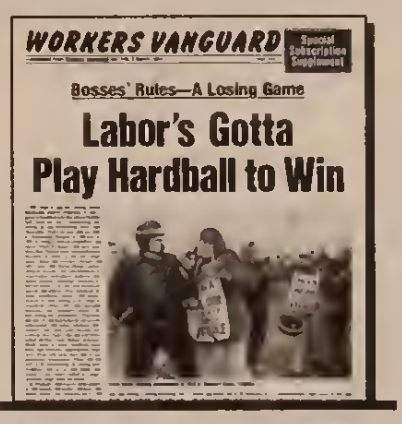
This anti-labor offensive, which began under right-wing Democratic president Jimmy Carter, was then escalated under the even more right-wing Republican president Ronald Reagan. It was signaled by the smashing of the PATCO air controllers strike in 1981, and the subsequent union-busting during the Greyhound strike and other strikes. We addressed the need of the labor movement to combat the capitalist offensive at the time, especially in the piece "Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win" (*WV* No. 349, 2 March 1984). What we said in "Hardball," that labor can't play by the bosses' rules, remains just as valid for the U.S. labor movement today.

AP

John Harris/IFL

Capitalist class war against workers. Left: Leaders of PATCO air traffic controllers union hauled off in chains during 1981 strike. Above: Cops battle pickets during British coal miners strike in September 1984.

Here I want to emphasize an aspect of the anti-labor offensive in the early-mid 1980s that was not so obvious at the time. The ascendancy of monetarism and financial "deregulation" as a doctrine and policy in Reagan's America and also in Thatcher's Britain was in part based on and conditioned by the crippling of the labor movement. In Britain, the decisive rightward shift in the balance of class forces was the defeat of the 1984-85 miners strike. Comrade McDonald's recent note on the impact of the economic crisis in Britain pointed out that in 1986 the Thatcher government "deregulated" the City of London. It was, as they say, no accident that the unleashing of speculative finance capital in Britain took place right after the defeat of the miners strike.



March 1984 *WV* supplement underlines the necessity for a class-struggle strategy for the workers movement.

In the U.S. in the 1980s, which liberals often call "the greed decade," there was a massive upward redistribution of income, combined with a massive increase in U.S. foreign indebtedness. The Reagan administration cut taxes for the rich while greatly expanding military spending in the escalating Cold War II against the Soviet Union. To finance the resulting large government deficits, a large proportion of newly issued Treasury bonds were sold abroad, mainly to the Japanese. Within the space of two or three years, the U.S. went from being the world's largest creditor nation to the world's largest debtor nation.

The upward redistribution of income and the increasing U.S. foreign indebtedness was organically tied to the deindustrialization of America. Large parts of the Midwest came to be called the "rust belt." In the mid 1960s, manufacturing accounted for 27 percent of U.S. gross domestic product and employed 24 percent of the labor force. By the early 2000s, the weight of manufacturing had been reduced to 14 percent of total output, and employed only 11 percent of the total labor force.

Basically, real hourly wages for non-supervisory workers peaked in the early 1970s. For most of the past three and a half decades, real compensation per unit of labor has been less than that level. Only occasionally and briefly, for example during the last phase of the 1990s economic boom, has real hourly take-home pay approached or exceeded what it was in the early '70s. Insofar as working-class families increased their income in recent decades, it was by having both husband and wife work full-time, working a lot of overtime and even two jobs, if such work was available.

However, by the beginning of the 2000s this extensive means of increasing family income was pretty much exhausted. At the same time, working people were faced with a sharp increase in certain basic expenses—housing (both buying and renting), medical care and college tuition for their children. So they had recourse to ever greater debt. By the eve of the current crisis in early 2007, average household debt was *30 percent greater* than annual disposable income. This was possible mainly because families were borrowing against the equity in their homes by "taking advantage," so to speak, of the then expanding housing-price bubble.

Dot-Com Boom and Housing-Price Bubble

To understand the housing-price bubble of the early-mid 2000s, we have to backtrack a bit and look at the so-called dot-com boom of the mid-late 1990s. This was a classic boom-bust cycle as described by Marx in *Capital*. A burst of investment mainly in new technology—in this case, computerization, Internet services and telecommunications—increased what Marx called the organic composition of capital. This is the value of the means of production (the labor time embodied in it) needed to employ living labor. In bourgeois economics, it's called capital per worker. A rising organic composition of capital drives down the rate of profit. Even if productivity rises and wages don't, increased profit per worker does *not* offset increased capital per worker.

This dynamic was clearly seen during the 1990s boom in the telecommunications sector, one of the mainstays of the "new economy" or "IT (information technology) revolution." The return on capital for telecommunications companies fell steadily from 12.5 percent in 1996 to 8.5 percent in 2000. At the time, a Wall Street analyst, Blake Bath, described in his own way the law of the falling tendency of the rate of profit with regard to telecommunications. "It looks like the sector is way overcapitalized," he judged. "Spending has grown at absurdly fast levels relative to the revenues and profits produced by that spending" (*Business Week*, 25 Sep-

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tember 2000). Or as Marx put it in volume three of *Capital*: "The ***real barrier*** of capitalist production is ***capital itself***" (emphasis in original).

In 2000-01, the dot-com boom went bust, ushering in a recession. Seeking to soften the impact of the economic downturn, Alan Greenspan, head of the Federal Reserve (the U.S. central bank), flooded financial markets with money. The Fed cut the interest rate charged on short-term loans to member banks from 6.5 to 1 percent by 2003, at the time the lowest rate in half a century. During most of this period, the so-called federal funds rate was less than the rate of inflation. In effect, the government was giving away money to Wall Street financiers. In late 2004, the London *Economist* warned that America's "easy-money policy has spilled beyond its borders" and "has flowed into share prices and houses around the world, inflating a series of asset-price bubbles."

At the core of the current crisis is a class of financial instruments known as derivatives. Traditional, primary financial securities—corporate shares and bonds—are in a formal, legal sense claims on commodities, i.e., goods and services that embody both use value and exchange value as a product of labor. Derivatives are based on, or otherwise tied to, primary securities. A typical and important type is a credit default swap. Formally, and I emphasize formally, this is a kind of insurance policy against a corporate bond defaulting. However, you can buy a credit default swap without owning the corporate bond. In that case, it's a form of speculation that the corporation will default. Imagine that 20 people hold fire insurance policies on the same building, 19 of whom ***don't*** own the building. Well, welcome to the world of derivatives. Moreover, you can also speculate on price changes of a corporate default swap through what are called put or call options.

The basic point is that derivatives have been piled on top of derivatives on top of other derivatives. To quantify: in 2005, if you added up the nominal market value of all derivatives in the world, they were ***three times greater*** than the primary securities on which they were supposedly based. To understand the extreme severity of the current financial crisis, you have to recognize the ***sheer magnitude*** of what Marx called "fictitious capital" generated over the last few decades. In the early 1980s, if you added up the nominal market value around the world of all corporate shares and bonds and also government bonds, they were equal to about the annual output of goods and services, what bourgeois economists call the global gross domestic product. In 2005, the International Monetary Fund calculated that if you did the same operation, the value of only primary securities to global gross domestic product was almost four times greater. And if you put on top of that derivatives, the amount of risk in the financial system has been multiplied many times over.

Charles R. Morris, a critically minded financial journalist, described how this Everest of spurious paper "wealth" was concocted:

> "How could leverage get so high? In the class of instruments we've been talking about, there are relatively few 'names,' or underlying companies, that are deeply traded, several hundred at most. And a relatively small number of institutions, basically the global banks, investment banks, and credit hedge funds, do most of the trading. In effect, they've built a huge Yertle the Turtle-like unstable tower of debt by selling it back and forth ***among themselves***, booking profits all along the way. That is the definition of a Ponzi game. So long as a free-money regime forestalled defaults, the tower might wobble, but stayed erect. But small disturbances in any part of the structure can bring the whole tower down, and the seismic rumblings already in evidence portend disturbances that are very large." [emphasis in original]
>
> —*The Trillion Dollar Meltdown: Easy Money, High Rollers, and the Great Credit Crash* (2008)

As the tower of debt collapses, it is relentlessly pressing down the prices of all financial assets other than First World government securities. And they, too, may soon go.

Impact on West Europe and Japan

The financial crisis has greatly exacerbated the interimperialist tensions and conflicts of interest in what is increasingly becoming the European Dis-Union. The various national bailout schemes have intensified intra-EU financial competition. Short-term speculative money capital flows into those countries—for example, initially Ireland—in which government policies appear to make the banks and other financial institutions more secure. And then it flows right out again when other governments offer seemingly more generous bailout packages.

We've also seen an increasing rift between the two core countries of the EU and euro zone: Germany and France. The vainglorious French president Nicolas Sarkozy, who perchance also happened to hold the revolving-door "presidency" of the EU during the second half of 2008, has presented himself as the savior of world capitalism. He has pushed various ambitious financial regulatory and economic "stimulus" schemes on both an EU-wide and international basis. Needless to say, Sarkozy's posturing has not endeared him to the rulers of non-French imperialist states.

In particular, the German ruling class, represented by the coalition government of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, has rudely squelched the Frenchman's various schemes. No German *geld*, they declaim, will be spent to pay for the profligacy and economic foibles of its European "partners." More generally, the powers that be in Berlin have insisted that it's up to other countries—read the U.S.—to fix their own economies in a way that will help Germany as well. In the words of German economics minister Michael Glos: "We can only hope that the measures taken by other countries...will help our export economy" (*Financial Times*, 1 December 2008). Dream on, Herr Minister!

AP

Workers occupy office at Kaida toy factory in Dongguan, China, November 2008. Global economic crisis reveals downside and inflexibility of Chinese Stalinists' "socialist market" economy.

Japan, which is a very big player in the international economy, has not gotten sufficient attention from the American financial press. Japan is the second biggest economy in the world. Even more importantly, it's the largest creditor nation in the world. While China has recently overtaken Japan as the biggest holder of U.S. government securities, Japan holds a far larger volume of private debt from corporations all around the world.

In 1989-90, a real estate and stock market bubble in Japan burst, and it ushered in a decade of stagnation, what later came to be known as "the lost decade." The monetary authorities pushed interest rates down to effectively zero in order to stimulate investment. As it happened, the policy worked but not in the way the government authorities intended it. The huge overhang of excess industrial capacity and "nonperforming bank loans" discouraged additional investment *in Japan itself*. So Japanese financiers and investors all over the world borrowed cheap money in Japan and then invested it in other countries where for one reason or another the rate of return was higher. In the financial press this was known as the "yen carry trade."

The yen carry trade is now being pushed hard into reverse gear. That is, investors are selling their assets all over the world, at rapidly diminishing prices, in order to repay their loans to Japanese banks and other institutions. But this has become a *self-defeating* process. Because as this money floods into Japan, it drives up the value of the yen relative to the currencies of almost all the countries in which the debtors have invested. So that increases the real burden of their outstanding debt and future debt repayments. Imagine that you were bailing out a large tub of water and that for every bucket you threw out, a bucket and a half flowed back into the tub through an underground pipe. Well, that's basically the situation now facing foreign and also the Japanese investors who have taken advantage of the more than a decade-long yen carry trade.

At the same time, the appreciation of the yen is driving up the prices of Japanese goods in world markets at a time of rapidly declining global demand. The core of Japanese industrial capitalism is taking a big hit. Toyota expects a loss in its auto/truck business this fiscal year for the first time in seven decades. Sony has announced it is laying off 5 percent of the workforce in its electronics division and closing down up to six factories around the world.

Global Crisis Jolts China's "Socialist Market" Economy

So what about China—which we understand is not capitalist, but a bureaucratically deformed workers state? During the 1997-98 East Asian financial-economic crisis, China effectively offset the impact of the crisis by substantially expanding investment in industrial construction and infrastructure. And the Beijing Stalinist regime is trying to replicate that policy now. In early November, it announced a big stimulus package (equivalent to $585 billion) centered on expanding infrastructure—railways, roads, airports, ports and the like. Subsequently, however, it was reported that the actual amount is much smaller than initially indicated. Only one-quarter of the funds will be provided by the central government; the other three-quarters are supposed to come from local government bodies and state-owned banks. But these institutions have far more limited financial resources. Stephen Green, an economist with the Standard Chartered Bank in Shanghai, commented in this regard: "With revenues falling, it is difficult to see how local governments, banks and companies can make up the rest of the Rmb 4,000bn" (*Financial Times*, 15-16 November 2008).

Comrade Markin and I have discussed the impact of the global crisis on China. And we both think that this time around, unlike in the late 1990s, the Chinese economy is not going to get by basically unscathed. To begin with, this is not a regional but a global economic downturn. And it's centered in the U.S. and West Europe. All indications are that it's going to be very severe and fairly prolonged. One consequence is that this increases the likelihood of anti-Chinese trade protectionism in the U.S. and in West Europe.

We are going to see, and are now actually seeing, the *downside and inflexibility* of what the Chinese Stalinists call a "socialist market" economy. There are tens of thousands of factories in China employing tens of millions of workers

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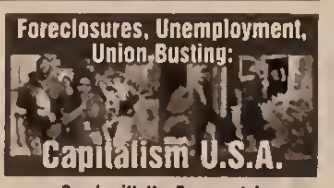

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Economic Crisis...

(continued from page 9)

owned by domestic entrepreneurs, offshore Chinese capitalists in Hong Kong and Taiwan and foreign corporations that produce commodities specifically geared to the advanced capitalist countries, commodities like toys, CD players and global positioning systems for cars. These factories cannot quickly and easily shift production to, say, producing household appliances for Chinese workers and peasants. And that would be the case even if the People's Liberation Army flew helicopters over working-class neighborhoods and rural villages and dumped bundles of money for the inhabitants.

Furthermore, the Beijing regime has encouraged its own version of a housing-price bubble and a residential construction boom. The large and increasingly affluent urban petty bourgeoisie—Chinese yuppies—borrowed money to buy, build and expand houses not just to live in them but as financial investments. They expected that the market price of these would continue to spiral ever upward. Well, the housing bubble has now burst. In one upscale Beijing neighborhood, the price to purchase new apartments fell 40 percent between February and October of last year. The London *Economist* (25 October 2008) commented: "The housing market provides some nasty shocks to China's new middle classes." Of course, we're not that concerned about the travails of Chinese yuppies. We are, however, very much concerned about the effect of the collapse of the housing-price bubble on *our* class: the proletariat. It's had a depressing effect on the residential construction industry, most of whose labor force consists of male migrant workers from the countryside.

The upshot is that China, unlike almost all capitalist countries, is not going to go into a recession. But the likelihood is that it is going to experience a sharp decline in the rate of growth, which in the past couple of decades has averaged around 10 percent. Correspondingly, there's going to be a large increase in the number of urban unemployed, both from workers, who are laid off in the private sector, and from peasants, who are coming into the cities looking for work but not finding any. According to official figures, by the end of November, ten million migrant laborers were laid off from their jobs in urban China. And this economic distress is going to produce increased social unrest. There have already been angry protests by laid-off factory workers in the Pearl River delta, the main region in China producing light manufactures for First World markets.* What we do not and cannot know is whether the increase in worker unrest will destabilize the political situation. That is beyond the scope of our current knowledge.

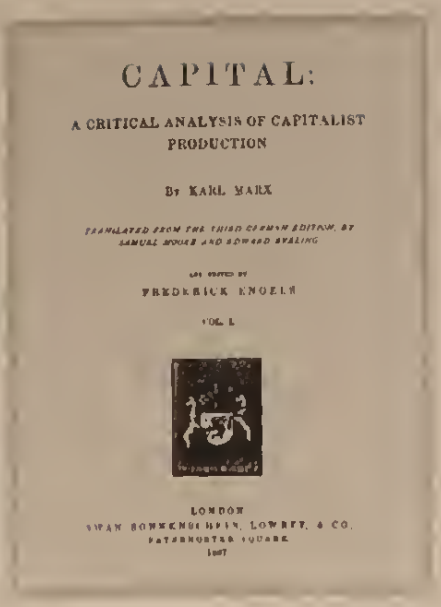
The Revival of Keynesianism

What's likely to happen? All indications are that this is going to be an exceptionally severe and prolonged world economic downturn, especially bad in the U.S. and Britain. At the level of ideology, and to a lesser extent, policy, we are going to see, and have already seen, a shift from the right wing to the left wing of the bourgeois political spectrum: fiscal policy based on increased deficit spending, partial nationalization of the banks and other financial institutions, attempts at expanding and tightening regulation of financial transactions and the like.

Comrade Robertson and others have observed that monetarism as a doctrine has been completely discredited and Keynesianism is back in fashion. I have seen more positive references to John Maynard Keynes in the English-language financial press in the last six weeks than I have seen in the last ten years. Comrade Blythe pointed out that it is a deeply ingrained American liberal myth that Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, based on Keynes's doctrines, got the U.S. out of the Great Depression of the 1930s. No, what got the U.S. out of the Depression was the expansion of "public works" during World War II, the "public works" being tanks, fighter planes, aircraft carriers and the atomic bomb.

We have written about Keynesianism in the past, unfortunately the rather distant past in terms of our tendency's history. I recommend in particular three pieces. In the early 1960s Shane Mage, a founder of our tendency, wrote a doctoral thesis, "The 'Law of the Falling Tendency of the Rate of Profit': Its Place in the Marxian Theoretical System and Relevance to the U.S. Economy" (Columbia University, 1963). Incidentally, his thesis adviser was Alexander Ehrlich, the author of *The Soviet Industrialization Debate 1924-1928*. Mage's work contains a section explaining the difference between Keynes's and Marx's understanding of the basic cause of economic downturns. In the 1974-75 world economic downturn, I wrote a piece called "Marx vs. Keynes" (*WV* No. 64, 14 March 1975), which was partly theoretical and partly empirical. And in 1997-98, *WV* ran a five-part series under the general heading of "Wall Street and the War Against Labor." Part Three, "The 1930s New Deal and Labor Reformism" (*WV* No. 679, 28 November 1997), contains an analysis of Keynes at the theoretical level as well as an empirical analysis of the U.S. during the 1930s, the actual policies of the New Deal and the economic developments during the Second World War.

Progress



Boom-and-bust cycles outlined by Karl Marx in his seminal work, *Capital*, demonstrate fundamental irrationality of capitalist system of production.

I want to conclude with a couple of points where the current situation is very different than in the 1930s. As I previously indicated, the current situation is very different in that the sheer volume of nominal, legally contractual debts that cannot be repaid far exceeds, by large multiples, the financial resources of capitalist governments. Already, Britain and Italy have encountered difficulties in financing the increased budget deficits resulting from their various bailout schemes. The *Financial Times* (1 December 2008) quoted Roger Brown, a financial analyst with the Swiss bank UBS, who pointed out:

> "Governments are already running into problems, which does not bode well so early after the [bank] recapitalisations and extra funding needs have been announced.
>
> "We do have to ask whether there will be enough investors to buy the bonds, or at the very least over whether this will push yields substantially higher to attract them."

So all these bailout schemes can at most offset a small fraction of the losses.

The second is that the U.S. is going into this deep downturn with an enormous existing overhang of debt, much of which is held by East Asian governments and investors. And this puts a pretty tight upper limit on additional deficit spending. In his first post-election pronouncement, Barack Obama sought to *dampen*, not encourage, expectations that the U.S. is soon going to return to "prosperity": "I have said before and will repeat again: It is not going to be quick, and it is not going to be easy for us to dig ourselves out of the hole that we are in." Thus spake the new chief executive of the most powerful capitalist country in the world.

So what is the solution? It is, as we know, both simple and radical. The working class has to take over the productive resources of society—the factories, transport systems, electric power generating systems—from the capitalists and, through the establishment of a planned economy, use these resources in the interests of the working class and society at large. But in order to do that, you need a political party that represents the interests of the working class against the capitalist class. In the U.S., such a party would also stand for the rights and interests of the black and Latino oppressed minorities, for the rights of immigrants and all other oppressed sections of society. To build such a party, the workers have to break with, in particular, the Democratic Party—that is, the more liberal, or at least more liberal-talking, party of American capitalism. It is also necessary to oust the existing pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy and replace it with a leadership that fights for the interests of the workers, and again, of all of the oppressed. And it's only when that is done that it will be possible to realize a basic principle, namely, that those who labor must rule.■

AP

Barcelona, Spain: Nissan workers protest job cuts, November 2008, as world economic downturn hits Europe.

Mumia...

(continued from page 2)

In building for the December 6 protests in Philadelphia and other cities, *Workers World* (18 October 2008) stressed, "This is now his last chance for a new guilt-phase trial."

The reformists' illusions in capitalist democracy can be seen in the elation of WWP and the ISO over the election of Barack Obama. *Workers World* (14 November 2008) declared: "The election victory of Barack Obama will go down in history as a triumphant step forward in the struggle against racism and national oppression in the U.S." The ISO threw an election night party in Harlem to "celebrate the end of far too many years of republican [*sic*] rule." Just weeks earlier, Obama gave an interview with another admirer—right-wing journalist Michael Smerconish, a prominent voice calling for Mumia's death and co-author, along with Maureen Faulkner, of the 2006 lying tract, *Murdered by Mumia*. Claiming he hadn't studied Mumia's case, Obama nonetheless promised, "In my mind if someone killed a police officer, they deserve the death penalty or life in prison."

The battle for Mumia's freedom cuts to the core of racist American capitalism and its state. We fight for Mumia's freedom as part of the struggle for black liberation based on the program of revolutionary integrationism. We fight against every manifestation of racist oppression, a struggle which can be victorious only through the full social, political and economic integration of black people into an egalitarian *socialist* society. The social power of labor needs to be mobilized in his defense. ***Mumia Abu-Jamal is innocent! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist death penalty!***

To contribute to Mumia's legal defense, make checks payable to "National Lawyers Guild Foundation" (earmarked "Mumia" on bottom left) and mail to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 2012, New York, NY 10159-2012.■

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UE Workers...

(continued from page 3)

issued statements of solidarity. The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, wrote in a December 6 letter of support: "This action is an example of what is needed for working-class struggle throughout the country.... If there is any attempt on the part of the company or the state to victimize these workers, we call on all labor to rally to their defense."

Reeling from the global economic crisis, the U.S. capitalist rulers are intent on restoring profits by gutting the United Auto Workers (UAW) and other manufacturing unions. Detroit, home to auto's Big Three, is already one of the nation's most beleaguered cities, with official unemployment now above 21 percent and more than 44,000 abandoned homes.

A host of capitalist Democratic Party politicians immediately stepped in to contain the struggle at Republic and helped broker the quick settlement. With sit-in demands limited to calls for the severance benefits and eight weeks' pay to which workers are entitled under federal law, Democrats, from president-elect Barack Obama on down, expressed their support. As *Workers Vanguard* salesmen said in discussions with Local 1110 members occupying the Republic plant, workers must place no reliance on such support, coming as it does from the quarters of the class enemy. Democrats voice sympathy for workers only so they can more effectively pose as phony "friends of labor" while defending the interests of big business.

Obama and the Democrats have worked hand-in-hand with the Bush administration to bail out Wall Street and now put the squeeze on the UAW. If auto workers were to occupy a plant in defense of their livelihoods, Obama et al. would have a very different reaction. In a December 21 interview on ABC's *This Week*, vice president-elect Joseph Biden summarized the incoming White House's position: "Labor, in order to save their own jobs, in order to save the prospect of an industry, is going to have to make some more sacrifices."

To hell with sacrifice! The working class has been taking it for decades. Speaking at the PDC's December 14 Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners in Chicago, Local 1110 steward Ricardo Caceres said, "This is an example right now for each person working in the United States. Take the example—no more abuse!" What's needed is militant labor action, drawing upon the collective strength of the union movement backed by the millions of working and unemployed people. Key to fighting the bosses' all-sided and escalating attacks is the *political independence* of the working class from the bourgeois state and the capitalist parties.

By chaining the unions to the class enemy, primarily through support to the Democratic Party, the trade-union bureaucracy has effectively done the dirty work of keeping class peace and enforcing givebacks. Over a century ago, American socialist pioneer Daniel De Leon aptly called these union misleaders the "labor lieutenants of capital." Today the labor tops, who poured *$450 million* into the 2008 elections, spread the lie that the Democrats will "fight for our jobs."

The UE brass is no exception. Not only did they mobilize the UE ranks to hustle votes for Obama last fall, but they also embraced one Democrat after another during the sit-in at Republic. Even before the sit-in began, the UE tops had placed the fate of union members in the hands of Democratic Congressman Luis Gutierrez, a loyal cog of the Chicago Daley machine, to "mediate" the dispute with the Republic bosses.

This open class collaboration was cheered on by reformists like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Workers World Party (WWP), water boys for "progressive" pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucrats and Democratic Party politicians. Having helped build support rallies for the Republic workers, the ISO gushed in its online *Socialist Worker* (10 December 2008): "With this grassroots support from below, and the support of politicians like President-elect Barack Obama from above, there's heavy pressure on Bank of America to hand over the cash needed to settle workers' claims." Meanwhile, *Workers World* (10 December 2008) proclaimed the Democrats' "support of the workers' struggle" a "monumental victory."

Such shameless enthusing over the role of the Democratic Party is typical of the reformists, who share with the union bureaucrats a touching faith in this capitalist party. In fact, there is little that the reformists won't say to cover for the Democrats. In the December 17 issue of its paper, WWP absurdly proposes that the arrest of Illinois governor Rod Blagojevich was planned to stop him from carrying out his threat to cut off the state's business with Bank of America unless the Republic workers got their checks, as well as "to warn Obama not to do anything like this ever again"!

As Marxists, we seek to arm the proletariat with the consciousness and leadership necessary for combat with the forces of the capitalist class. This means taking on the class-collaborationist politics of the trade-union bureaucracy and their left hangers-on. Not so the centrist Internationalist Group (IG), which in its December *Internationalist* article on the plant occupation entirely conceals the fact that the UE tops, like the rest of the labor bureaucracy, reinforce the political subordination of the workers to the Democratic Party. So while the IG warns that "unemployment is going to get worse, a lot worse, under Obama," it alibis the UE bureaucrats by leaving unsaid their support for him.

Even after winning their demands of severance pay, Republic workers are out of a job and the bosses are free to open their non-union Iowa shop. At the same time, this action gave a taste of the power of labor. There is no simple trade-union solution to the situation confronting the working class. But by wielding the methods of class struggle on a wide scale, workers can advance their cause, starting with organizing the unorganized. As we wrote in "Bosses Declare War on UAW Workers" (*WV* No. 926, 5 December 2008): "The labor movement would find many allies if it were to take up the fight for socialized medicine—the expropriation of the parasitic health care and drug companies, who are an immediate threat to the well-being of just about everyone in this country. A fight to demand that the government extend unemployment benefits and guarantee the pensions of all workers...would also garner many allies."

But the present sellout union leaders are not about to step beyond what is acceptable to the capitalists. The road forward requires a political struggle against the labor tops and the forging of a new leadership that will mobilize union power independently of the bosses' government and parties. As the revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote after the waves of sit-down strikes that rocked the U.S. and France in the 1930s: "Independently of the demands of the strikers, the temporary seizure of factories deals a blow to the idol, capitalist property. Every sit-down strike poses in a practical manner the question of who is the boss of the factory: the capitalist or the workers?" (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, 1938). The UAW was born in the 1936-37 occupation of the huge Fisher Body plants in Flint, Michigan, which in turn inspired workers to occupy production lines in plant after plant across the country. Significant gains were won in those years, but from the outset workers were pushed away from a socialist political perspective by CIO union leaders and into the arms of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" and the Democratic Party.

Importantly, in the process of occupying the Republic factory, black and Latino workers were able to overcome the poisonous racial and ethnic divisions fueled by the company. Up until then, according to Latino worker Apolinar Cabrera, many immigrant UE members felt that black workers were privileged: "They get a chance to communicate with the management. When layoffs come, maybe they get a chance to stay in the plant [instead of] being laid off" (Chicago Public Radio, 17 December 2008). At the same time, black Local 1110 vice president Melvin Maclin recalled that black workers had felt that they were being laid off because they were black and that they had considered reporting the Latinos to immigration. But opinions changed with the plant occupation: "When we first decided to do this, we all thought we were going to jail," said Maclin. "But for me to see a lot of people standing up, willing to occupy the plant, concerned that there could be immigration issues, that just raised my respect for them even [more]. It's to the ceiling."

It is through *united class struggle* that the divisions between white and black workers, and between the native-born and immigrants, can be overcome. As we wrote in "Labor: Defend Immigrant Rights!" (*WV* No. 898, 14 September 2007):

> "There is a crying need for a revolutionary workers party—a party that fights to *organize the unorganized*; that mobilizes labor's power to *bust the union-busters*; that fights tooth and nail in defense of the rights of black people, immigrants and all the oppressed; that fights for a *workers government* that will expropriate the bloodsucking capitalist rulers and uproot their system of exploitation, oppression and imperialist war."■

Bloodbath in Gaza...

(continued from page 1)

destroyed lives, with barely supplied hospitals overwhelmed by the number of the injured and mutilated arriving. Even the pro-Zionist *New York Times* found that the initial airstrikes, which took place as women congregated in the markets and children emerged from schools, had "a shocking quality."

The Israeli air attacks especially targeted government buildings and other installations occupied by Hamas, which the Zionists and imperialists have long labeled "terrorist." In preparation for the attacks, Israel launched a disinformation campaign, announcing that it would open border crossings and postpone threatened airstrikes. Hamas, which had evacuated its personnel from official buildings, then, according to an Israeli official, "sent its people back in when they heard that everything was put on hold" (*Ha'aretz* online, 28 December 2008). Scores of them died under the bombardment.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank, the Palestinian population has been sealed off by an apartheid wall and subjected to a deadly military occupation. A Palestinian youth participating in protests near Ramallah against the airstrikes in Gaza was shot to death by Israeli forces. *All Israeli troops and settlers out of the Occupied Territories!*

Israel's mass murder in Gaza was coldbloodedly prepared months in advance. *Ha'aretz* online (28 December 2008) reported that Barak "instructed the Israel Defense Forces to prepare for the operation over six months ago, even as Israel was beginning to negotiate a ceasefire agreement with Hamas.... Barak gave orders to carry out a comprehensive intelligence-gathering drive which sought to map out Hamas' security infrastructure." Israel effectively put an end to the unstable "ceasefire" with Hamas—on the night of the U.S. presidential election—by launching attacks in Gaza that killed half a dozen Hamas militants. The resulting (largely ineffective) mortar and rocket attacks from Gaza against nearby Israeli towns were then used as the pretext for the massive assault.

Across the Near East, protests of tens of thousands have erupted, not only denouncing the Zionist massacre but also condemning the pro-U.S. Arab regimes, not least that of Egypt. On the eve of the assault, Israeli foreign minister Tzipi Livni briefed Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak on Israel's plans. Mubarak promptly rushed several hundred additional guards to help police the border wall separating Gaza from Egypt. As frantic Palestinians fleeing the Israeli bombardment stormed across the border, Egyptian guards opened fire. According to *Al Jazeera* (30 December 2008), "Mubarak announced on Egyptian television...that the Rafah crossing will not be fully re-opened until Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian president, regains authority in the territory." For his part, while condemning the Israeli attacks, Palestinian Authority president Abbas grotesquely blamed Hamas for the Israeli attack and called on them "to stop the bloodshed."

That call parallels the line of the Bush administration, which predictably announced that it "holds Hamas responsible." Meanwhile, Democratic president-elect Barack Obama made his support to Israeli attacks on Hamas clear during the presidential election campaign, stating: "If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that. And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing."

A 27 December 2008 statement by Workers World Party's (WWP) International Action Center declared: "We demand that U.S. aid to Israel be cut to zero, and that this money be used instead for reparations for the Palestinian people, to ensure their right to return, and for homes, jobs, health care and education for working people in the U.S." The reformist WWP, which celebrated Obama's victory as a "triumphant step forward in the struggle against racism" (*Workers World*, 14 November 2008), promotes the lie that U.S. imperialism can serve the interests of the Palestinians abroad and working people at home. U.S. imperialism—responsible for the slaughter of hundreds of thousands in the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq—is the deadliest enemy of workers and the oppressed throughout the world. *U.S. out of Iraq and Afghanistan! Down with U.S. imperialism!*

Both the Palestinian Arab and Hebrew-speaking peoples of Israel/Palestine lay claim to the same small piece of land. Under capitalism, the exercise of national self-determination by one will necessarily be at the expense of the other. The national emancipation of the Palestinians—including the right of all refugees and their descendants to return to their homeland—necessarily entails workers revolutions to shatter the Zionist state from within and to sweep away the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Syrian Ba'athist bonapartists and the capitalist rulers of Lebanon—countries that all have sizable Palestinian populations. We look to the proletariat of the region more widely, such as in Egypt, which has been a center of working-class strikes and protests over the past several years. *For a socialist federation of the Near East!*

Israeli society is not a seamless mass of reaction but a class-divided society, with a working class exploited at the hands of its "own" ruling class. We have no illusions that it will be easy to shatter the chauvinism of the Hebrew working class. It will likely take cataclysmic events—such as military defeat or revolutionary upheavals in the region—to break the Israeli proletariat from Zionism. This task is not made easier by the criminal indiscriminate terror bombings carried out by Palestinian forces against Israeli civilians, which drive the Hebrew population further into the arms of the Zionist rulers. The key in Israel/Palestine, as throughout the region, is the forging of revolutionary workers parties that fight for socialist revolution internationally.■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Greece Rocked by Protests

Rizospastis

Down With Police Terror!

Above. Students protest in Athens on December 13 against police killing of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos. Right: Police assault demonstrator before funeral of slain youth, December 9.

EPA

In response to mass protests in Greece against police violence and state repression, the Trotskyist Group of Greece on 9 December 2008 issued the leaflet published below. The translation and accompanying introduction, which we have adapted here, were first published by *Workers Hammer*, paper of the Spartacist League/Britain. The TGG and SL/B are sections of the International Communist League, as is the Spartacist League/U.S.

The protests erupted over the cop murder of a student in Athens on December 6. The leaflet was distributed during the massive one-day general strike on December 10, which had been called by the main union federations before the killing, in opposition to the government's anti-working-class austerity program. The Greek government asked the trade-union leadership to call off the strike but the bureaucracy feared a backlash at the base if they cancelled the strike. The unions rallied at the parliament building instead of marching through the city. The main Greek trade-union federations—the General Confederation of Workers of Greece (GSEE) and the Confederation of Public Servants (ADEDY)—are led by PASOK, which, while often painted as a reformist workers party by the Greek left, is a thoroughly bourgeois-populist formation.

Greek organizations such as the Socialist Workers Party (SEK), cothinkers of the British Socialist Workers Party (formerly allied with the International Socialist Organization in the U.S.), and the Xekinima (Start) group, allied with the Socialist Party in Britain and represented in the U.S. by Socialist Alternative, tail PASOK. Their central slogan is: "Down with the government of murderers!" These reformists, as the TGG leaflet explains, aim to replace the rightist "neoliberal" regime of Karamanlis's New Democracy (ND) with a "left" bourgeois government. This would mean either the return of PASOK or a new popular front made up of some combination of PASOK and Syriza (Coalition of the Radical Left, which is dominated by Synaspismos, formed out of the old "Eurocommunist" wing of the Communist Party). Such an outcome would simply create a new roadblock to the working class in its struggle against the capitalist exploiters, while nourishing the growth of fascists like Golden Dawn who have been mobilizing to attack the youth protests.

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE), which leads a significant section of the proletariat, today strikes a posture of opposition to PASOK, saying in its newspaper *Rizospastis* (11 December 2008): "ND/PASOK, same story—austerity, unemployment, terrorism," declaring "No more illusions" and posing the choice as: "Either with capital, or with the workers." However the KKE certainly does not stand for the class independence of the proletariat or for principled opposition to entering into coalitions with bourgeois parties. Quite the contrary—throughout its history the KKE has upheld the treacherous Stalinist policy of popular-front betrayal of the working class. Most recently, in the late 1980s, the KKE participated in popular-front coalitions with both New Democracy and PASOK and will have no compunction against doing so again if the opportunity presents itself.

Grotesquely, the KKE participated in violence-baiting the anarchists and initiated a witchhunt of the tame social democrats of Syriza, falsely claiming that the latter condones the burning of shops. Refusing to defend the anarchists against the right-wing government's witchhunt, both the KKE and Syriza are attempting to prove to the bourgeoisie that they are reliable candidates to defend the capitalist order.

The protests against the brutal police killing of Alexandros Grigoropoulos intersected planned strikes and protests by the trade unions against the impact of the global economic crisis on workers. Greece has a current account deficit of about $53 billion, or 15 percent of its gross domestic product, the highest in the euro zone. Youth unemployment is around 19 percent, while the overall jobless rate is over 7 percent. There is massive public anger against the Karamanlis government that has attacked the living standards of the working class through privatizations, tax increases and "reform" of pensions, in a country where it is estimated that 20 percent of the population lives in poverty. Contrary to PASOK leader Papandreou's promises of "change," a PASOK government would be just as committed to making the working class pay for the capitalist crisis.

* * *

ATHENS, DECEMBER 9—On December 6 in the district of Exarchia in Athens a 15-year-old student, Alexandros Grigoropoulos, was murdered in cold blood—shot by a police officer. Spontaneous protest demonstrations broke out in Athens and Salonika, spreading rapidly to the rest of Greece, where they are ongoing today. In what the press describes as the biggest crisis in Greece since the end of the bloody colonels' rule in 1974, demonstrators have come face-to-face with the brutal reality of the "democratic" capitalist state. At least 150 people have been brought before the police department, 70 have been detained and the repression continues. *We defend the anarchist and other youth protesters against state repression! We demand the immediate dropping of all charges against the protesters! For the immediate release of all those arrested!*

The Trotskyist Group of Greece, sympathizing section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), solidarizes with the rage that has exploded in the streets against the police terror of the capitalist state. Fury over the murder of Grigoropoulos is only the "tip of the iceberg" of popular hatred toward the right-wing New Democracy government of Karamanlis which presides over mass unemployment, financial scandals, a huge and growing gap between rich and poor, and the brutal exploitation and repression of immigrants.

The protests against the cop terror need an organized expression—one that welds the anger of the youth protesters with the social power of the proletariat. The working class must be mobilized not only to defend youth protesters against the violence of the cops, but as part of a struggle against the capitalist system itself.

The reformist left is offering its own schemes for sanitizing the capitalist state and its forces of repression. The Communist Party of Greece, in a statement of 7 December 2008, declared: "The responsibilities of the government of ND are large and obvious, both in general and in particular for the climate which has been cultivated and for the education of the security forces." The president of Syriza, Alavanos, in a question in parliament to the Minister of Internal Affairs on December 8 asked: "What measures do you propose to take in order to instill in the police concepts of tolerance, democratic behavior and cooperation toward citizens?" The KKE and Syriza once again spread illusions that the capitalist state can be reformed and that the capitalist rulers can educate and enlighten the security forces or even be compelled to cede control of the police to the exploited and oppressed masses—the very masses the cops are paid to repress

The perspective of the KKE and Syriza is to replace the ND government with a new popular front. With crass opportunism these reformist parties hope to join with bourgeois parties in administering the bourgeois state, which will necessarily mean attacks on the working class. Support to such a popular front is also what lies behind the calls by reformists like the Cliffite SEK and DEA to get rid of the Karamanlis government.

As Lenin wrote in *The State and Revolution* (1917), "A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power.... The state is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it is the creation of 'order,' which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes." The "order" to which Lenin refers cannot be changed by throwing Molotov cocktails. Although anarchists may seem "militant" to some youth, they are opposed to building the one instrument that is indispensable for getting rid of the capitalist exploiters and their state—a Leninist vanguard party.

The world economic crisis has demonstrated the bankruptcy of the capitalist system, but there are no impossible situations for the bourgeoisie. We, as genuine Trotskyists, seek to mobilize the forces of the multiracial proletariat in class struggle, not only in protests against the capitalist system but in the fight to uproot it. We fight to forge Leninist vanguard parties as sections of the revolutionary international that is required to lead the working class to sweep away the capitalist exploiters and their states and to build workers states and a global socialist society based on equality.

An injury to one is an injury to all! Drop the charges!

For a revolutionary workers vanguard party in Greece, section of a reforged Fourth International! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 928 GCU C-701 16 January 2009

U.S. Imperialists Cheer on Israeli Terror in Gaza

Zionist Mass Murder

Defend the Palestinian People!

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

AP photos

Top: Israeli tank advances at Gaza border, January 8. Left: Palestinian woman weeps over dead relatives after Israeli missile strike in Gaza, January 8. Right: Funeral in Jabaliya refugee camp for 14 of some 40 Palestinians killed by January 6 Israeli bombing of UN school where hundreds of Gaza residents were taking refuge.

JANUARY 13—Some 1,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, nearly half of them women and children, have been slaughtered in little more than two weeks of Zionist terror, with over 4,300 wounded. The carnage began December 27 with round-the-clock air assaults that turned virtually all of the Gaza ghetto into ash and rubble, with streets littered with limbs of Palestinians dismembered by Israeli bombs and missiles. Under the pretext of responding to Hamas's (largely ineffectual) rocket attacks on nearby Israeli towns, the Zionist butchers—armed with U.S. warplanes, helicopters and missiles—have already slaughtered nearly twice as many Palestinians as during the first whole year of the Palestinian uprising that began in September 2000.

A week after the December bloodbath began, Israeli stormtroopers began their ground invasion. Over 10,000 troops of one of the most highly mechanized and powerful military machines in the world have torn a swath of terror and destruction through Gaza, split the Strip in two and are now poised for an invasion of the cities. *It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the military defense of Hamas against Israel without giving that reactionary Islamic fundamentalist outfit any political support. Down with U.S. aid to Israel!*

Israeli officials declared that there was "no humanitarian crisis" in Gaza; indeed, to the Zionist rulers, Palestinians are nothing more than *untermenschen* ("subhuman," as the Nazis described those whom they enslaved and exterminated). The leaflets that Israel drops warning Palestinians to flee are a cruel reminder that Gaza's residents have nowhere to flee from what is essentially a concentration camp surrounded by an electrified fence, a sealed border with Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. Israel has bombarded schools, mosques and United Nations refugee centers—as the Zionists have done in the past. On January 6, over 40 Palestinians taking refuge in a UN school in Jabaliya were killed by Israeli bombardment. Two days earlier, Israeli military forces shelled a house in Zeitoun, southeast of Gaza City, after telling over 100 Palestinians to take shelter there, killing up to 30. Human Rights Watch has accused Israel of using U.S.-made white phosphorous shells, which burn the flesh down to the bone. Israel used white phosphorous during the 2006 war in Lebanon and the U.S. used it in Iraq during the 2004 attacks on the city of Falluja.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank, the Palestinian population has been sealed off by an apartheid wall and subjected to a

continued on page 7

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For the Communism of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg!

Progress

Dietz Verlag Berlin

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In the tradition of the early Communist International, this month we commemorate the "Three L's": Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin, who died on 21 January 1924, and revolutionary Marxists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who were assassinated 90 years ago on 15 January 1919 by the reactionary Freikorps as part of the Social Democratic government's suppression of the Spartakist uprising. Lenin's determined struggle to forge a revolutionary vanguard party was key to the victory of the Russian Revolution of October 1917. In contrast, the German Communist Party was founded only over New Year's 1919—two weeks before its principal cadres were murdered—with slim roots within the proletariat. The murder of Luxemburg and Liebknecht deprived the young, inexperienced Communist Party of its authoritative revolutionary leadership, helping to shipwreck the 1918-19 German Revolution and weakening the party when it faced later upheavals, such as the aborted 1923 German Revolution.

We reprint below a 13 January 1945 article from the *Militant*, newspaper of the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, titled: "Liebknecht and Luxemburg—Heroic Martyrs in the Workers Struggle for Socialism." The mention of the burial of the Third International at the end of the article refers to its formal dissolution by Stalin in 1943; it had become an agency for promoting the Stalinist bureaucracy's class-collaborationist treachery long before.

* * *

On January 15, 1919—twenty five years ago—the German proletariat was robbed of two of its greatest revolutionary fighters, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. They were assassinated in the streets of Berlin by Junker hirelings of the Social-Democracy. But neither the ideas nor the tradition of personal heroism bequeathed by these Marxists of the First World War could be slain. Their names will be inscribed in flaming letters when the mighty German working class again rises against its oppressors to find the path to peace and security under the red banner of international socialism.

Intransigent opponents of capitalist war, both Liebknecht and Luxemburg fought persecution and imprisonment to lead the workers of Germany in the struggle for socialist liberation. Son of the founder of the German Social-Democracy, Karl Liebknecht first proved his stature as early as 1906 when he delivered a series of lectures against capitalist militarism to a Socialist Youth organization. He was sentenced to 18 months in prison for their subsequent publication.

When World War I broke out, Liebknecht was a member of the Reichstag. The Social-Democratic party to which he belonged opportunistically swung over to support of the war. But Liebknecht adhered to the principles of Marxism. At the December 2, 1914 session he broke the discipline of the Social-Democratic Reichstag group and voted against war credits, thereby taking his place amongst the leaders of international socialism. With Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin and Franz Mehring, he founded "Die Internationale," first illegal organ of the German revolutionists.

At the magnificent May Day demonstration he organized in Berlin in 1916, Liebknecht denounced the imperialists and called upon the German working class to intensify the fight against its main enemy—the capitalist class—at home. He was arrested, secretly tried, and sentenced to four and a half years' imprisonment.

"Red Rosa"

Rosa Luxemburg, fiery orator, gifted writer, theoretician and activist, conquered physical frailty to become one of the most eminent of revolutionists. Born in Czarist Poland, a political refugee at the age of 18, she devoted all her tremendous talents to the cause of socialism. She secured German citizenship and fought the growing reformist tendencies and the revision of Marxism promoted by the Bernsteinists in the German Social-Democracy. Understanding the problems and strategy of the workers' movement, she saw in the Russian revolution of 1905 the vitality and strength of the masses. She met the outbreak of war in 1914 by calling upon the German workers to refuse to shoot down their French brothers. Like Liebknecht, she was imprisoned.

Tireless and undaunted, Rosa was able even in prison to smuggle out articles for "Die Internationale." She also wrote the famous "Junius" pamphlet, circulated throughout Germany, explaining that the victory of either side—German or Allied—would necessarily lead to another world slaughter, and urging the masses to end the scourge of war by taking power from the plutocrats and organizing a workers' republic.

In prison Rosa received the great news of the Russian Revolution. She burned with indignation over the Brest-Litovsk peace forced by Germany upon the Bolsheviks. She accused the pro-war "socialists" of responsibility for this crime because of their degrading submission to the Junkers. The Russian Revolution deeply inspired her. Enemies of the October Revolution have tried to construe her criticism of the Bolsheviks as an opposition to the Russian Revolution. This is false. It was as one of them that she criticized some of their tactics.

In 1918 came the revolt of the Kiel sailors and soldiers of Berlin. One of the very first acts of the revolutionary workers and soldiers was to throw open the prison gates to free Liebknecht and Luxemburg. The Social-Democratic traitors strove to persuade the Kaiser to remain. Failing to save the monarchy, hating and fearing Bolshevism above everything else, they then strained all their efforts to establish a bourgeois republic and prevent the workers from taking power. The Social-Democracy particularly feared the Spartakus Bund, organized in 1918 by Liebknecht and Luxemburg, which came out as an independent party with the slogan "All Power to the Workers' Councils."

Organize for Power

Conscious of their tasks and the pressure of time, Liebknecht and Luxemburg began to organize the German Communist Party with haste. Rosa edited "Rote Fahne" (Red Banner) and wrote the program for the party in complete agreement with the program of Lenin and Trotsky. But events moved too rapidly. The advanced workers were pressing forward. The German Communist Party, just emerging from the Spartakus group, was still too weak to take power.

The leadership of the Social-Democracy, holding the reins of government, did everything in its power to crush the revolution in its infancy. Leaflets were circulated demanding the death of Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Large rewards were offered for their capture. On Jan. 15, 1919, they were arrested and murdered.

In his call for the formation of the Third International to carry out the socialist tasks betrayed by the Social-Democracy (April 23, 1917), Lenin singled out for praise the handful of internationalists who upheld the banner of Marxism through the storm of the First World War.

"The most outstanding representatives of this trend in Germany," wrote Lenin, "is the Spartakus Group or the Group of the International to which Karl Liebknecht belongs. Karl Liebknecht is one of the most celebrated representatives of this trend and of the new and genuine proletarian international...Liebknecht alone represents socialism, the proletarian cause, the proletarian revolution. *All* the rest of German Social-Democracy, to quote the apt words of Rosa Luxemburg (also a member and one of the leaders of the Spartakus Group) is a 'stinking corpse'." After their martyrdom Lenin acclaimed Liebknecht and Luxemburg as "the best representatives of the Third International."

Last year the Third International which had likewise degenerated into "a stinking corpse" was formally buried by its executioner, the counterrevolutionary Stalin. Today only the Fourth International founded by Trotsky carries on the struggle for international socialism in the revolutionary spirit of Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg.■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing dete for news in this issue is January 13

No. 928 **16 January 2009**

Letter

A Clarification on Sam Marcy and Henry Wallace

11 January 2009

To *WV*:

Our article, "Why Marxists Oppose Capitalist McKinney/Green Party Campaign" (*WV* No. 919, 29 August 2008), stated: "It's not surprising that the tendency within the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1948 that wanted to support Wallace was grouped around Sam Marcy, who later went on to form the Workers World Party [WWP]." A letter by comrade Reuben Samuels in the same issue characterized debate on Wallace at the SWP's February Plenum as "the 1948 fight with the Marcyites." Actually, while Marcy later wrote a document stating that he advocated support to Wallace at the 1948 Plenum, the available documentary record shows that he did not play a leading role at the time. But there were groups of other leading SWPers who wanted to either give critical support to or work within the capitalist Wallace "third party movement" (for a fuller discussion of our opposition to capitalist

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Germany: SPD in Deep Crisis

AP

DPA

Willi van Ooyen of Die Linke and Andrea Ypsilanti of SPD call for Die Linke-backed SPD-Green government in Hesse, Germany. Right: Police under Berlin SPD-Die Linke government attack squatters in June 2005.

Left Party: No Alternative!

The following article is translated from Spartakist *No. 174 (November 2008), newspaper of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

SPARTAKIST

The SPD [Social Democratic Party] is in crisis. With its working-class base deserting to Die Linke [The Left party], the new leadership is desperately trying to reconsolidate its links to the trade unions in order to keep them compliant to the anti-working-class measures of the Grand Coalition [coalition government of the SPD and Christian Democrats (CDU) since 2005]. This was highlighted by a secret meeting of SPD leaders with chairmen of the IG Metall (IGM) [metal workers union], about which the *Rheinische Post* (24 September 2008) reported: "SPD representatives expressed their 'dismay' that Left Party members in the trade unions were able to organize their 'crusade against the SPD' out of union offices." According to the same article, the IGM tops agreed to be more aggressive in publicly attacking Die Linke, while the SPD promised to refrain from passing further anti-union laws. The anger at the base of the unions was reflected in the reaction to this report by an IGM shop steward from a large auto factory: "It would be a disgrace if the union got into horse-trading with the SPD here.... It better watch out not to fall on its face—a lot of union members are followers of Die Linke and have turned their back on the SPD by now."

The SPD is riven between serving the bourgeoisie in the government, on the one hand, and the objective interests of its base in the working class and the unions on the other. As the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) explains, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." The present, capitalist society is fundamentally divided into two classes whose interests are irreconcilably counterposed: The proletariat produces the wealth of society in industry, transportation, etc., while the capitalists, who own the means of production, appropriate this wealth and extract their profits through the exploitation of labor. Due to its position in the production process, the proletariat is the only class with both the material interest in liberating the socialized process of production from the fetters of private ownership and developing it on the basis of a collectivized economy for the benefit of all, as well as the social power to carry out this revolution. The social democracy—the SPD, Die Linke and the trade-union bureaucracy—seeks to reconcile the workers with capitalism and chains them to their "own" exploiters. The more the social contradictions between the workers and capitalists are sharpened, the more untenable the situation of the social democracy will become.

The attempts by the now-deposed SPD chairman, Kurt Beck, to reconcile the SPD's working-class base with "Agenda 2010," "Hartz IV" and similar attacks [on social welfare programs and workers' living standards] only increased the discontent in both wings of the party. This came to a head in spring [2008] after elections in the state of Hesse, where the SPD's lead candidate, Andrea Ypsilanti, got an unexpectedly high result by campaigning more or less in opposition to the unpopular policies of the CDU-SPD national government. She announced she would form a minority government there with the support of Die Linke.

At the end of July 2008, the SPD's party court of North Rhine-Westphalia decided in favor of the expulsion of SPD right-winger Wolfgang Clement after Clement had publicly spoken out against Ypsilanti in the elections and indirectly supported the arch-reactionary CDU president of Hesse, Roland Koch. In the sequel, the party tops lined up behind Clement, while the trial was referred to the highest party court. As the former "super-minister" under [Gerhard] Schröder [SPD chancellor from 1998 to 2005], he is rightfully hated in the working class as architect and outspoken advocate of "Agenda 2010." When the workers at the Opel [auto plant] in Bochum struck against threatened layoffs in 2004, Clement scornfully rejected appeals from the party base for support and denounced the strike as senseless. The treasurer of the SPD local in Bochum-Hamme complained angrily: "We worked our asses off for years in election campaigns, and when he went to Berlin we hoped that he could do something for us" ("He Never Was a Social Democrat," *stern.de*, 31 July 2008).

Now, following Beck's removal, Schröder's old guard is back at the head of the SPD. This is meant to signal to the bourgeoisie that the party is well suited to continue to administer German imperialism. From sending the Bundeswehr [German army] to take part in the imperialist U.S.-led NATO war against Serbia in 1999, to the massive attacks on the unions and social benefits, to plans for the deployment of the Bundeswehr domestically and a universal strengthening of the state repressive machinery, the SPD-Green government and now the CDU-SPD government have done a lot to advance capitalist class interests on the backs of the working class, ethnic minorities and all the oppressed.

The SPD's new candidate for chancellor, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, is not just any Schröder crony. As head of the chancellor's office during the "Red-Green" government, he personally managed German imperialism's participation in the racist "war on terror." He was responsible for deciding (and then trying to cover up) the fates of Murat Kurnaz, Khaled El-Masri and who knows how many others of Muslim descent—whom the U.S. and German governments branded as "terror suspects" and then tried to "disappear." Steinmeier made sure that Kurnaz suffered for years in the hell of the Guantánamo torture camp, even blocking his return to Germany in the face of repeated U.S. offers between 2002 and 2005 to release him. Even in 2007, after this atrocity had been made public and came before an investigative body, Steinmeier told *Spiegel* (27 January 2007): "I wouldn't decide differently today."

That large sections of the working class, particularly the lower and middle levels of the trade unions, are turning away from the SPD, which they have historically viewed as their party, represents a major shift in Germany's political landscape. Up to now this has been mainly expressed in the electoral successes of Die Linke, which was formed by a fusion of the West German SPD-split WASG [Electoral Alternative for Work and Social Justice] with the East German ex-Stalinist PDS [Party of Democratic Socialism]. On the one hand a product of the massive disillusionment and anger at the base of the SPD, on the other Die Linke is the means by which a section of the trade-union bureaucracy seeks to contain that anger within the framework of social-democratic reformism. This was very clearly expressed in the call for the founding of one of the WASG's precursors, the ASG, in March 2004: "Many citizens are turning their backs on politics and feel disappointed with the SPD, but don't see themselves represented by any

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AFP

Frankfurter Rundschau

Strike at Opel auto plant in Bochum in 2004. Right: Demonstration against SPD-Green attacks on social welfare programs and workers' living standards in Berlin, November 2003.

For a Multiethnic Revolutionary Workers Party!

Germany...

(continued from page 3)

other party. We see in this a danger for the stability of our democracy."

For communists, the crisis of the SPD is an important and positive development. Since 1914 the SPD has been the most important agent of the German bourgeoisie within the workers movement and the main obstacle to proletarian revolution in this country. The problem is that the consciousness of the workers who are turning away from the SPD is marked by the bourgeois lie that there is no alternative to capitalism. This prevailing consciousness is above all the result of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the DDR [East Germany] and the Soviet Union, which is presented by the bourgeoisie and its social-democratic lackeys as inevitable and celebrated as proof of the supposed superiority of capitalism. As we explained in the ICL's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program":

> "Trotsky's assertion in the 1938 Transitional Program that 'The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat' predates the present deep regression of proletarian consciousness. The reality of this post-Soviet period adds a new dimension to Trotsky's observation.... Marxism must once again win the allegiance of the proletariat."

Die Linke is infused with bourgeois "death of communism" ideology and is just as loyal to this capitalist system of exploitation as the SPD, but would prefer to have more crumbs from the capitalists' profits to toss to the workers. Both the SPD and Die Linke are what Lenin called bourgeois workers parties, i.e., parties with a working-class base but a pro-capitalist leadership and program. For a revolution in this country to succeed, these parties must be split along the class line that runs through them, and the working-class base must be won to a Leninist party.

The consciousness of the workers will be changed in the course of *class struggle*, which is inevitably generated by capitalism and its crises. Through class struggle the working class can win confidence in its own social power, overcome the divisions created by racism, chauvinism and other bourgeois prejudices, and grasp the need to stand at the forefront of all the oppressed in an all-sided struggle against this whole exploitative system. Decisive is the conscious intervention of communists to bring Marxist consciousness into the working class and forge a multiethnic revolutionary workers party in order to deepen and connect these struggles, pointing to the necessary overthrow of capitalism. Today the task consists of gathering and steeling the core of such a party, based on the program of Trotskyism—authentic Marxism. For this purpose we carry out an uncompromising political struggle against reformist illusions propagated by supposed Marxist organizations—from Stalinists like *Junge Welt* and the DKP [German Communist Party], to the pseudo-Trotskyists of marx21, Gruppe Arbeitermacht (GAM) and Sozialistische Alternative (SAV). These groups work overtime to strengthen illusions in Die Linke among workers and youth, and with their left cover for parliamentary reformism and rotten class collaboration they are an obstacle to raising and developing class consciousness.

European Left Preaches "Death of Communism"

The crisis of the SPD has developed parallel to dramatic changes in mass reformist parties throughout West Europe. The majority wing of the old Italian Communist Party, which split in the early '90s, has passed through social democracy and, with its fusion [in 2008] with Prodi's Christian Democrats, now appears to have become an outright bourgeois party. Meanwhile, the social-democratic Rifondazione Comunista (RC), formed by the minority wing, is now in a severe crisis following its participation in two different Prodi-led popular-front governments. The French Communist Party (PCF) has likewise collapsed dramatically. In Britain, starting in the mid '90s Tony Blair's Christian "New Labour" leadership has proceeded to break from its proletarian base, a process that, while unfinished, has gone some way down the road toward transforming Labour from a bourgeois workers party into something analogous to the capitalist Democratic Party in the U.S.

In different ways, these developments reflect the effects of the capitalist counterrevolutions that between 1990 and 1992 destroyed the deformed workers states of East Europe and ultimately the degenerated workers state of the USSR. Feeling the wind in their sails, the capitalist rulers proclaimed the "death of communism" as the ideological accompaniment to their onslaught against the trade unions, increased racist state repression and murderous plundering of the neocolonial countries. In West Europe, a central aim of the capitalists has been the dismantling of social benefits of the so-called welfare state—concessions granted in the context of the Cold War to contain the powerful workers movements and keep them from "becoming red"—in order to better compete with their imperialist rivals (especially the U.S. and Japan). The massive attacks have been carried out in large part by capitalist governments in which reformist parties participated, which has led to massive anger at the base of these parties. At the same time, the bourgeoisie has reduced the share of the super-profits that it expends on maintaining a privileged layer of the working class, the aristocracy of labor, which forms the main support of the social democracy.

DPA

Die Linke leader Oskar Lafontaine criticizes SPD attacks on workers' living standards but subordinates working class to capitalist state and promotes nationalist protectionism.

Spartakist

Berlin, January 11: Spartakist Workers Party of Germany protests attacks on Palestinians. Sign reads: "Palestinians Are Being Slaughtered in Gaza, But Today in Berlin, Klaus Lederer of Die Linke Promotes Zionist Butchers," denouncing Lederer's appearance at a "Solidarity with Israel" rally.

In this situation, the fake socialists seek to fill the vacuum with various right-wing "regroupment" schemes. Having long since reconciled itself with the bourgeois order, the Pabloist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) in France is now formally junking the terms "revolutionary" and "communist" from its name to form a "New Anti-capitalist Party" in order to capitalize on the PCF's collapse. In Britain, the Cliffite Socialist Workers Party (SWP, cothinkers of the German group marx21) openly opposed any pretense of "socialism" or even secularism in the founding of Respect, a thoroughly bourgeois electoral combination. Now, a couple of years later, Respect has undergone a split, and the SWP's section bombed in the subsequent elections. Since then, the Respect parliamentarians who had allied with the SWP have decamped to Labour, the Liberals, and even to the conservative Tories!

The German pseudo-Trotskyists who are liquidating into Die Linke are pursuing the same kind of opportunist maneuvers that in other countries have often simply blown up in the faces of their sister organizations. Reformism is inherently nationally parochial, since at bottom it amounts to chasing after a wing of one's *own* bourgeoisie.

These organizations see openings in the post-Soviet "death of communism" climate, which indeed *they* themselves helped to bring about by *supporting* capitalist counterrevolution down the line. When Die Linke formed a couple of years ago, Christine Buchholz of Linksruck (now marx21) expressed this view of the current period as follows: "The regroupment processes are taking place, in fact worldwide. Since the collapse of the Eastern Bloc, the old dividing lines—catchphrase: where do you stand on the Soviet Union?—are no longer decisive" ("Between Trotsky and Lafontaine," *Junge Welt*, 16 May 2006). So, the October Revolution is "no longer decisive." Sound familiar? This regurgitation of the "death of communism" ideology is not surprising coming from Linksruck: Its forebears were expelled from the Fourth International because they publicly refused to defend North Korea and the Soviet Union against the imperialists in the Korean War. In 1991, it cheered the victory of Yeltsin's counterrevolutionary forces in the Soviet Union with the words: "'Communism has failed,' declare our newspapers and TVs. It is a fact which ought to delight every socialist" (*Klassenkampf*, September 1991).

Last year, Linksruck formally dissolved itself in order to better submerge in Die Linke in the form of "marx21." Janine Wissler, one of their supporters, was voted into Die Linke's six-person parliamentary fraction in Hesse, and Christine Buchholz is a member of the national party's executive leadership. Wissler's enthusiasm in rallying Die Linke for support to a minority government led by Ypsilanti so favorably impressed *Spiegel* that the magazine happily noted of Die Linke's parliamentary fraction in Hesse: "Not long ago, some of them dreamed Lenin's dream of the world revolution. But in the meantime, they seem to have internalized the legendary slogan of Franz Müntefering: 'Opposition is crap'" ("Münte statt Lenin" [Münte Instead of Lenin], *Spiegel*, 22 September 2008). What this bourgeois magazine cynically calls the "dream of world revolution" is for marx21 nothing but the stuff of occasional Sunday speeches. Their talk of "building extra-parliamentary resistance" is also empty phrasemongering, since in fact they just offer more of the same reformist parliamentary cretinism. The result is to further demoralize those who are dissatisfied with capitalism and fed up with social-democratic treachery.

This wretched "Realpolitik" is integrally linked with marx21's and the other Cliffites' virulent hostility to the Soviet Union and other states where capitalism had been overthrown. This hostility also unites them with the various pseudo-Trotskyists, whatever their different formal ideological shadings are. In reunified capitalist Germany, a key index of loyalty to the system of capitalist exploitation is the attitude to the ever-present anti-DDR witchhunt. The anti-Communist campaign by the SPD, along with CDU and FDP [Free Democratic Party], in response to Die Linke's offer to support Ypsilanti, served not only as an electoral club against Die Linke, but more importantly as a test of Die Linke's "reliability" for the capitalist rulers. Thus the Hesse SPD demanded of Die Linke, as precondition for accepting its offer to tolerate its government, both the "clear recognition of our constitutional order and our parliamentary democracy" as well as a distancing "from every form of bondage and human rights abuses as were practiced, e.g., in the DDR, including the shoot-to-kill orders, Stasi surveillance and restrictions on the freedoms of opinion, elections and travel."

Die Linke predictably obliged. The

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Cliffite Wissler gave the following explanation in an interview with *Junge Welt* (10 September 2008), in which she described the negotiations with the SPD and Greens as "friendly and pleasant":

> "We've already made it clear, repeatedly, where we stand on the DDR and the constitution. We don't need to repeatedly come to terms with these things. By the same token we could also demand of the SPD that it comes to terms with its own mistakes. For example, that today millions of people have to live on 350 euros per month. Or that the SPD is responsible for the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht."

What glorification of capitalist "democracy": Not only is the murder of the revolutionary heroes and founders of the KPD, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, prettified here as a "mistake." But this SPD crime in the service of saving the German bourgeoisie from workers revolution is also equated with the founding and the very existence of the DDR, a bureaucratically deformed workers state which arose in half of Germany following the Red Army's heroic liberation of Europe from Hitlerite fascism. In opposition to the Cliffites and other pseudo-Trotskyists, we defend the basic Trotskyist understanding of such states: The expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the collectivization of the economy embodied in the deformed and degenerated workers states represent, despite the political rule of a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, enormous ***historic progress*** over capitalism.

We of the International Communist League fought with all our forces to mobilize the working masses throughout the Soviet bloc to fight against capitalist counterrevolution. This would have meant the ***working class*** reckoning with the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies, which after years of undermining the workers states and trampling on proletarian internationalism administered the treacherous sellout to imperialism. From fighting to give revolutionary leadership to the incipient political revolution in the DDR in 1989-90 to our call issued in August 1991 in the Soviet Union: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!", we heeded Trotsky's warning of the "tragic possibility" that the Soviet degenerated workers state "will fall under the joint blows of its internal and external enemies":

> "But in the event of this worst possible variant, a tremendous significance for the subsequent course of the revolutionary struggle will be borne by the question: ***where*** are those guilty for the catastrophe? Not the slightest taint of guilt must fall upon the revolutionary internationalists. In the hour of mortal danger, they must remain on the last barricade."
>
> —"The Class Nature of the Soviet State," 1933

We stand for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam against imperialism and internal capitalist restoration, and on this basis we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies. This program and the lessons of the struggle against counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc are key to breaking the multiethnic working class in Germany from the class collaboration and chauvinist protectionism pushed by the sellout trade-union tops in league with both social-democratic parties, the SPD and Die Linke.

Down With Class Collaborationism!

As doctors at the sickbed of capitalism, the Die Linke tops seek to enter capitalist coalition governments and carry out the bourgeoisie's dirty work, which they promise will make capitalist exploitation "social." This can be seen in their eagerness to support an SPD-Green government in Hesse, which [Die Linke co-chairman Oskar] Lafontaine & Co. see as a springboard for getting into other capitalist governments, including the federal government, over the course of the year. From Thuringia, where Die Linke has a good chance to come out as the strongest party, to the Saarland, where Lafontaine was SPD president from 1985 to 1998, they hope to position themselves to be able to administer capitalism at the national level in coalition with the SPD and possibly the Greens after the 2009 elections. Especially against the backdrop of the financial crash and developing economic crisis, they seek to present themselves as suited for managing the crises of capitalism. They aim to advance the bourgeoisie's interests through an alternative strategy for German imperialism, to act more independently of the U.S.

"State, intervene!" is the slogan of the "good old" social democracy mourned by Lafontaine and the pseudo-socialists, who complain that Schröder & Co. have betrayed this tradition in favor of "neoliberalism." They promise to prevent the crises of capitalism and subordinate the economy to "democratic" control through the intervention of the bourgeois state. In reality, this serves all the better to subordinate the working class and its organizations to the state of the class enemy. Now the capitalist governments all over the world are intervening...tossing trillions of

José Giribás

German troops patrol streets of Mazar-al-Sharif in 2007, as part of U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan.

dollars and euros in tax money to the banks and credit institutions in order to nationalize the losses of the filthy rich finance speculators, while "Hartz IV" [social welfare] recipients here suffer and hundreds of thousands of blacks and poor people in the U.S. are driven out of their homes!

Although its *Bundestag* [German parliament] fraction voted against it, Die Linke fundamentally ***supports*** a bailout and demands protectionist measures. In the name of "protecting German industry," the working class is being lined up behind its own imperialist bourgeoisie. This is ***poison*** for the consciousness of the working class, splitting it along national lines, and it is counterposed to the international class solidarity that is urgently necessary in order to lead hard class struggle against the capitalists and beat back the advancing attacks.

While Die Linke's fraction in the *Bundestag* voted against the bailout—where its votes had no impact on the outcome anyhow—Harald Wolf, a Die Linke minister in Berlin, voted for it in the *Bundesrat* [upper house of parliament]. The Die Linke tops in Berlin have experience in bank bailouts. In 2002, right after its ministers had taken office in Berlin, the then-PDS fulfilled its election promises by passing the "Law for Shielding Risks" for the Bankgesellschaft Berlin, providing a guarantee of more than 21 billion euros for the losses of real estate speculators who had bet on a real estate boom in Berlin following the capitalist reunification. Just as is planned with the current mega-bailouts, this "socialism for the rich" was carried out on the backs of the working people, financed through massive cuts in public services, the shredding of union contracts, wage cuts, etc.

SAV, marx21, *Junge Welt* and various other "left critics" in Die Linke gripe about the leadership of the Berlin branch and its "neo-liberal" government policies in order to cover their left flank. In the end, this is just empty phrasemongering without consequences, since in practice their support is certain whenever it counts—whether voting the PDS into office in 2001 in Berlin or voting for Die Linke in the *Bundestag* elections in 2005. At bottom, what they call for is just a more comprehensive intervention by the capitalist state in the name of "democratic" control of the banks. Typical of this is the following appeal to the Berlin government issued by the district chairman of Die Linke in Berlin-Neukölln, where pseudo-Trotskyists such as SAV and marx21 cavort: "Only a transfer of the financial institutions to public property offers the possibility for control by society over the tax money spent." And just who is to provide the "possibility for control" on behalf of "society," Lafontaine as finance minister?

They all support joining capitalist governments in principle, but want the *conditions* for this to be set higher than those of the Berlin coalition with the SPD (which is quite unpopular by now). The "maximum program" of organizations like the SAV is classic social-democratic reformism: a "socialist" majority in the bourgeois parliament and a "really democratic" capitalist government that can be pressured to make the rich pay. In this way, they strengthen reformist illusions among workers and youth and give left cover for the atrocities which are inevitably carried out by the social-democratic ministers in capitalist governments. As can be seen in Berlin, the result is the demobilization of class struggle in the face of capitalist attacks and a tremendous demoralization of trade unionists, the oppressed and the working class as a whole.

Against the reformists' deception, Friedrich Engels explained long ago in his 1878 polemic *Anti-Dühring* that the ***class character*** of the state renders the elimination of capitalist crises impossible:

> "But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces.... The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head."

In the course of the present crisis, this fundamental insight has been confirmed by capitalist governments all over the world. The only way to end the crises, oppression and exploitation of capitalism is through proletarian revolution to smash the repressive capitalist state machinery and replace it with organs of working-class rule, ripping the ownership of the means of production out of the hands of the tiny, obscenely rich, capitalist exploiting class in order to reorganize society on a socialist basis. This is the dictatorship of the proletariat, the first, necessary step toward overcoming all class differences and the corresponding withering away of the state.

The attitude toward the bourgeois state is the fundamental line between reform and revolution: The reformist view that one can take hold of the existing state apparatus and administer it in the interests of the workers versus the Marxist understanding—as laid out by Lenin in *The State and Revolution* (1917) and *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* (1918)—that the capitalist state apparatus must be smashed through proletarian revolution. Mobilizing the working class for this historic task requires a ***class-struggle*** program to fight ***independently of the capitalist state*** for the burning needs of the working class and all the oppressed. We are opposed on principle to running for or occupying the executive offices of the capitalist state, whether at the local, state or national level—mayor, state president, chancellor, federal president, etc.

As Rosa Luxemburg wrote: "The entry of a socialist into a bourgeois government is not, as it is thought, a partial conquest of the bourgeois state by the socialists, but a partial conquest of the socialist party by the bourgeois state" ("The Dreyfus Affair and the Millerand Case," 1899). We differentiate sharply between the acceptance of executive offices and the revolutionary utilization of parliament. The former necessarily means administering capitalism—e.g., deploying the cops for strikebreaking or ordering racist deportations—and is therefore class betrayal. Bourgeois parliaments, on the other hand, can be used as a platform for propagating the communist program and exposing bourgeois democracy as a veil for capitalist rule.

The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard

In September, the SAV announced that it would now also join Die Linke in Berlin and the East, a move which elicited resistance from Die Linke's national leadership. In fact, this newest maneuver underlines what we earlier said in 2006 about their candidacy, which at the time was in opposition to the PDS in Berlin: They don't represent any fundamental *class* opposition to the pro-capitalist Linke/PDS/WASG tops. Thus, [SAV spokesman Lucy] Redler and other SAV supporters defended themselves as follows: "The independent candidacy was not harmful to the party, as was even attested by a bourgeois court, which reversed the removal of the WASG state leadership by the WASG national leadership" (*sozialismus.info*, 22 October 2008). These reformists are ***proud*** of having gotten a

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Germany...

(continued from page 5)

certificate of approval by the courts of the class enemy! We denounced this wretched crossing of the class line at the time: "The legal complaint by the Berlin SAV/WASG against the WASG national leadership provided the capitalist state with legitimation for this incredible interference into a left organization and therefore did much worse damage to the left and workers movement than it would have had the Berlin WASG not been able to take part in the elections."

The "entrism" maneuvers of SAV, marx21 and the others in Die Linke are grossly opportunist. Leninists seek to deepen the contradictions between the aspirations and objective interests of the working-class base on the one hand and the policies and actions of the social democratic leadership on the other. We want to win the working-class base to our program and to the building of a revolutionary party, in *counterposition* to the SPD and Die Linke, in the course of mobilizing for class struggle and the exposure by the communist vanguard of social-democratic treachery. In the framework of this strategic perspective, various tactical options are open to an intelligent revolutionary organization, to be employed according to the objective circumstances. These tactics and their implementation flow from the strategic necessity of splitting these parties along class lines: At all times we maintain strict *programmatic* independence from *all* wings of the social-democratic bureaucracy.

This has absolutely *nothing* to do with the activities of the pseudo-Trotskyists in and around Die Linke, for the simple reason that they all oppose the perspective of forging a Leninist vanguard party to lead the multiethnic proletariat at the head of all the oppressed in the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. Instead, they help subordinate workers and youth to one or another wing of the pro-capitalist leadership (right now, this is primarily Lafontaine, who employs somewhat more leftist phrases), in order to "pressure" Die Linke and its capitalist coalition governments "to the left." Redler, for example, explained that it is the SAV's aim, "as Marxists" within Die Linke, to help "build a strong socialist wing in Die Linke that will reject government participation as in Berlin" (*Junge Welt*, 12 September 2008).

Then there are those like Gruppe Arbeitermacht (GAM), which weighed in with an article in its *Infomail* (21 September 2008) on the SAV's entrism in Die Linke, in which they make some rather orthodox-sounding criticisms. For example, accusing the SAV of "veiling the true character of this party," the GAM calls Die Linke a "bourgeois workers party.... The noncommittal socialist phrases which are occasionally uttered don't change this at all." In reality, the GAM is disgruntled that the SAV didn't go along with its Network Left Opposition (NLO) at the time of the WASG's fusion with the PDS: "This policy exposes not only the SAV's typical centrist wavering: this policy also boycotted the opportunity, with the NLO, of building up a nationwide structure that could become a pole of attraction for leftist, militant anti-capitalist forces."

The NLO was a lash-up of a number of fake-socialist grouplets which, like the GAM, preferred to build a pressure group on Die Linke from *without*. As for their reformist faith in the capitalist state, it was hardly any different from Die Linke or the SAV. For example, the NLO's founding "Felsberg Statement," for which the GAM is full of praise, supported entering "nice" capitalist governments: "The new party does not enter governments that carry out cuts in social services, lower contract standards or wages in public services, or lengthen the working hours of the employees." When the "Network" burst apart after less than a year because half of them wanted to join Die Linke, the GAM itself admitted that the NLO was politically bankrupt and had no reason to exist. Fundamentally, the GAM's framework is no different than the SAV's: pressuring the social democracy to the left. It just exhorts the SAV that this course is not realistic toward Die Linke, complaining that "the SAV doesn't [draw] the conclusion that Die Linke is a consolidated reformist party (and not one that is open or can be moved to the left)."

For the GAM and its international cothinkers, Workers Power (WP) [in Britain], the search for a wing of the social democracy (or even formations that aren't part of the workers movement at all) that "can be moved to the left" is their reason for existence. This was as clear as daylight when WP split in 2006, with two factions that differed over whether to tail the popular-frontist Social Forums (i.e., a *bourgeois* formation) or the Labour Party "lefts" in Britain [see *Workers Hammer* No. 196, Autumn 2006]. And notwithstanding the "radical" rhetoric with which it berates the SAV about the character of Die Linke as a "bourgeois workers party," for the GAM this simply means *always voting for them*. Right up until the formation of the WASG, the GAM perennially voted for the SPD, including in the 2002 national election after four years of the racist, anti-working-class SPD-Green government of the Balkan butchers Schröder and Fischer. When it counts, the GAM always ends up on the same side as the SAV, the side of social democracy and "democratic" imperialism. While the international allies of the SAV bragged about their efforts [in the Soviet Union] following Yeltsin's coup in August 1991 to convince workers who wanted to mobilize against the counterrevolutionary rabble to go home, supporters of Workers Power literally stood on Yeltsin's priest- and capitalist-ridden counterrevolutionary barricades.

Verlag Neues Leben

Regional gathering of German Communist Party youth organization in Eisleben, spring 1923. Germany, with its highly organized, pro-socialist working class, offered best opportunity to extend 1917 Bolshevik Revolution internationally.

The Lessons of October

The 1917 October Revolution could not have succeeded without Lenin's leadership and the existence of a steeled Bolshevik Party, which was the product of a split from the reformists (Mensheviks) and years of struggle against their influence in the working class. We have also drawn the lessons of the defeat of the post-World War I revolutionary wave in Germany, particularly the aborted German Revolution of 1923. Drawing a critical balance sheet of the 1923 German Revolution has been critical for us in clarifying the Leninist attitude to executive offices (see "Down With Executive Offices!", *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 60, Autumn 2007, as well as "A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 56, Spring 2001). One of the clearest indications of the huge revolutionary potential in Germany in 1923 was that the SPD lost control over the mass of the German working class. Amid the severe economic dislocation and hyperinflation, the reformist party and union bureaucracies were unable to function; they became paralyzed. The workers deserted them in droves, and, attracted by the beacon of working-class emancipation of the October Revolution, they decided it was time to give the communists a chance. But the KPD leadership failed the test of revolution. Having reined in the revolutionary strivings of the working masses earlier in 1923, it climbed down without a fight on the eve of a planned insurrection in October.

Instead of organizing the struggle for proletarian power, at bottom the KPD leadership under Heinrich Brandler banked on the illusion that the left wing of the Social Democracy could be induced to become a "revolutionary" ally. This strategy was codified in the misuse of the "workers government" slogan, which for the KPD had come to mean something other than the dictatorship of the proletariat—increasingly, it meant a coalition government with the SPD on the basis of the bourgeois parliament. This was an opportunist and self-defeating revision of the understanding of Lenin's and Trotsky's Bolsheviks in 1917 that a workers government would be achieved by the overthrow of the bourgeois state apparatus and the forging of a new state power founded on workers councils (soviets). This revision found its culmination in October 1923, in the entry of the KPD into coalition governments with the SPD in the states of Saxony and Thuringia and in their subsequent calling off of the insurrection, a craven adaptation to the coalition partners of the SPD "left."

Afterward, Trotsky began to evaluate the reasons for the 1923 defeat and to draw the lessons. This included a sharp criticism of the then-leadership of the Comintern for its wavering in the face of the development of this excellent revolutionary opportunity, and it also led to an implicit self-criticism of his own earlier, administrative approach. Trotsky stressed in *Lessons of October* (1924): "Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer." ***There are no "impossible" situations for the bourgeoisie; if a revolutionary party does not act, the bourgeoisie will regain control.*** Such was the outcome in 1923 in Germany. A multiethnic revolutionary workers party is indispensable to successfully end, once and for all, the rule of the German bourgeoisie that has brought so much bloody misery to the world's working masses and oppressed. We fight to cohere the nucleus of that party, based on the program of the SpAD, as part of reforging the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. ***Join us!*** ■

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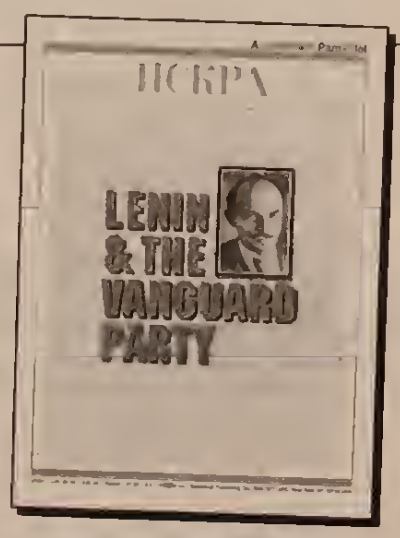

First published in 1978, this pamphlet provides a detailed historical and theoretical account of Lenin's struggle for a vanguard party. Includes: "In Defense of Democratic Centralism" and "The Fight for a Leninist Vanguard Party"

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University of Chicago, 1116 E. 59th St.
Harper Memorial Library, Room TBA

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Thursday, January 22, 6 p.m.

Why China Is Not Capitalist

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Gaza...

(continued from page 1)

deadly Israeli military occupation, including the shooting of demonstrators protesting the rampage in Gaza. Surrounded by 450,000 Zionist settlers who are backed up by thousands more troops, Palestinians are subjected to a series of military checkpoints and "Jewish only" roads that make travel between towns virtually impossible. ***All Zionist troops and settlers out of the West Bank and East Jerusalem!***

The Zionists' war on the besieged Palestinians is part of their drive for *lebensraum* ("living space," the Nazi term for displacing those they conquered), which threatens to engulf the entire Near East in conflagration. The *New York Times* (11 January) reported that in 2007 Israel sought U.S. "bunker buster" bombs to take out what the Israelis believed to be Iran's nuclear development sites. The *Times* said that the U.S. (for now) denied the request because it had its own program to undermine the Iranian regime. As we have repeatedly asserted, in the face of imperialist threats and blackmail, Iran needs nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to defend itself and deter an imperialist attack.

Predictably, the Bush administration has backed Israel's onslaught against Gaza to the hilt. For his part, president-elect Barack Obama made clear his support for Israel's attacks during the 2008 election campaign, stating during a visit to Israel: "If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that. And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing." Earlier, in January 2008, Obama wrote a letter to the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations on the eve of UN discussions on Israel's blockade of Gaza since Hamas's takeover of the Strip in 2007, a year after Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections. Obama claimed that "Israel is forced" into imposing the blockade and that it "has the right to defend itself."

Meni Berman

Reuters

Above: March in Tel Aviv against Israeli assault on Gaza, January 3. Below: Demonstrators outside Egyptian consulate in Istanbul protest Gaza attack, January 5.

AP

Obama posing with the Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak (far left) and Sderot mayor Eli Moyal during campaign visit in Israel last July. Obama has pledged to back Zionist terror.

Behind Israeli terror stands the far greater terror of U.S. imperialism, which has slaughtered hundreds of thousands in the bloody occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Obama has vowed to augment the Afghan occupation with 30,000 additional U.S. troops, while maintaining American forces in Iraq and ratcheting up threats against Iran and Pakistan. Referring to Obama's "seeming reticence to comment on Gaza," the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) complained that "Israel has nothing to fear from an Obama administration" (*Socialist Worker*, 9 January). Meanwhile, the Workers World Party (WWP) declared, "Obama's Middle East policy is not fundamentally different from the policies of Bush or McCain" (*Workers World*, 15 January). Such declarations are rich coming from these organizations, whose entire political outlook is determined by what is "possible" under the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. On the night of the U.S. presidential elections, the ISO threw a party in Harlem to "celebrate the end of far too many years of republican rule" and to discuss "what can activists do to press their demands on the next administration?" WWP, in the very same issue cited above, declared that Obama's election "was a watershed moment in U.S. history because it represented a breakthrough in the struggle against racism"!

The idea that one can expect "change," including on Near East policy, from Obama and the Democrats is as obscene as it is absurd. Nearly every Democratic politician has lined up behind Israel's war. New York governor David Paterson spoke at a pro-Zionist rally in New York City on January 11, while Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi sponsored a resolution in support of Israel's onslaught—which passed by 390 to 5.

There have been protests in cities across the world against the bloodbath in Gaza—and against the pro-U.S. Arab regimes, such as that of Egypt, which has virtually sealed its border with Gaza. The Spartacist League/U.S. and other sections of the International Communist League have intervened into these protests to express our solidarity with the Palestinian masses and to put forward the only perspective—international socialist revolution—that can put an end to Palestinian national oppression. ***The myriad peoples of the Near East will not know peace, prosperity or justice until bourgeois rule in the region is overthrown through a series of socialist revolutions.***

For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!

Nearly a century ago, revolutionary Marxist leader Rosa Luxemburg declared that the choice facing humanity is "socialism or barbarism." What the world is witnessing today in Gaza is an expression of the barbaric logic of capitalist imperialism and Zionist nationalism. For more than 60 years, Palestinians have suffered under the jackboot of Zionist Israel—an oppression that has intensified since the 1991-92 counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. The collapse of the USSR, which acted as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism, deprived the late Yasir Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of crucial diplomatic and financial support, paving the way for the ignominious 1993 U.S.-sponsored Oslo "peace" accords, establishing the Palestinian Authority as the Zionists' police auxiliaries in the Occupied Territories. In an article headlined "Israel-PLO Deal for Palestinian Ghetto" we wrote that this deal "does not offer even the most deformed expression of self-determination" and "would place the PLO's seal on the national oppression of the long-suffering Palestinian Arab masses" (*WV* No. 583, 10 September 1993). It was this betrayal by the secular-nationalist PLO that paved the way for the rise of reactionary Islamic groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad among the Palestinians.

Since Oslo, one "peace" accord after another has been heralded as opening the door to Palestinian national emancipation. In reality, under the rubric of the "peace process," the noose of Zionist oppression has only tightened, with ever deadlier cycles of terror against the Palestinian population.

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is one of interpenetrated peoples: two peoples laying claim to the same piece of land. Under capitalism, the exercise of national self-determination by one will necessarily be at the expense of the other. So long as the national principle prevails, the oppression of the Palestinians, the weaker side, will deepen.

The national emancipation of the Palestinians—including the right of all refugees and their descendants to return to their homeland—necessarily entails workers revolutions to shatter the Zionist state from within and to sweep away the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Syrian Ba'athist bonapartists and the capitalist rulers of Lebanon—countries that all have sizable Palestinian populations.

The Arab bourgeois regimes have always been enemies of Palestinian national liberation. When the Arab armies went to war with Israel in 1948, it was not to "liberate" Palestine but to carve it up among themselves. Between 1948 and the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the West Bank and Gaza were occupied by Jordan and Egypt respectively. And the Palestinians there remained politically dispossessed and subject to brutal repression. In the decade following the 1967 war, nearly *50,000* Palestinians were slaughtered by Arab governments, including some 10,000 militants killed by the Jordanian monarchy in the 1970 Black September massacre.

The solidarity of the Arab masses with the oppressed Palestinian people must be directed toward proletarian revolution against their own Arab rulers, who, whether bourgeois nationalists or Islamic traditionalists, are fundamentally the political agents of Western imperialism. If this does not happen, the intense and justifiable hostility against Israel and its American protector will serve to further strengthen the forces of Islamic fundamentalism, which posture as the "radical" opposition to the mainly pro-Western Arab regimes. We look to the proletariat of the region more widely, such as in Egypt, which has been a center of working-class strikes and protests over the past several years. ***For a socialist federation of the Near East!***

With some 50 percent of the Palestinian population living outside the Occupied Territories—in Jordan, Lebanon, Israel—the national liberation of the Palestinians demands a perspective of socialist revolution throughout the Near East, including within Israel, the most powerful and economically advanced country in the region. This means recognizing the right of the Hebrew-speaking people to national self-determination. In turn, breaking the Hebrew proletariat from their Zionist rulers requires that they champion the national rights of the Palestinians. We have no illusions that winning the Hebrew proletariat to this perspective will be an easy task. Indeed, it will likely require the victory of socialist revolution in one of the other Near Eastern states to break the Hebrew proletariat from Zionist chauvinism. This task is not made easier by the criminal indiscriminate terror bombings carried out by Palestinian forces against Israeli civilians, which drive the Hebrew population further into the arms of the Zionist rulers.

The Zionist state is not only a catastrophe for Palestinians—***it is also a deathtrap for Jews.*** As long as Zionist oppression of Palestinians continues, Israeli Jews will continue to be a target of hatred and outrage by the more than 100 million Arabs who surround them. It is only the working class of Israel—Hebrew and

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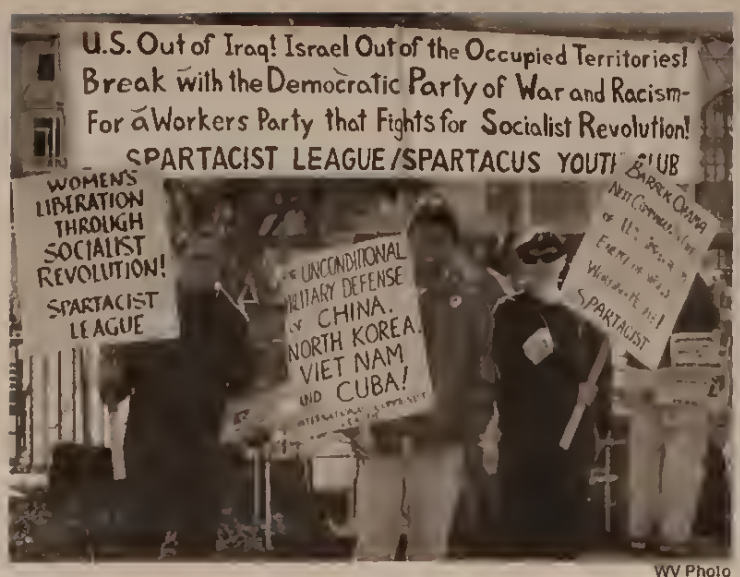

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Le Bolchévik

Spartacists join international protests against Zionist bloodbath in Gaza. Left to right: San Francisco on January 10, New York and Paris on January 3. Sign in French reads: "Israeli Troops, Settlers Out of the Occupied Territories! Down With the American-European-Zionist Embargo Against Gaza!"

Gaza...

(continued from page 7)

Arab—that has the capacity to destroy the Zionist citadel from within. Israeli society is not a seamless reactionary mass. Some 25 percent of citizens live in poverty and income disparities are higher than in Egypt and Jordan. It is the false consciousness of religion and Zionist nationalism and racism—in the face of pervasive anti-Semitism—that is the glue binding the Hebrew proletariat to its Israeli ruling-class enemy.

Even in the face of the current anti-Arab hysteria and widespread support for the Gaza war, there have been anti-war demonstrations in Israel, including a 10,000-strong rally in Tel Aviv on January 3. Sephardic Jews, though overwhelmingly under the sway of right-wing and religious parties, suffer widespread discrimination and poverty. The Palestinian Arabs, nominally "citizens" who constitute 20 percent of Israel's population, are consigned to segregated, impoverished areas and low-paid, unskilled jobs. On January 12, Israel's Central Elections Committee *banned* two Arab political parties from running in next month's elections.

It is vital to forge revolutionary Marxist parties throughout the Near East to unite the proletariat—Arab, Persian, Kurdish and Hebrew, Sunni and Shi'ite, Muslim and Christian—in struggle against imperialism and against the Zionists, mullahs, colonels, sheiks and all the other capitalist rulers. The conquest of power by the proletariat in the Near East does not complete the socialist revolution, but only opens it by changing the direction of social development. But that social development can be consolidated only through the international extension of the revolution, particularly to the advanced, industrialized imperialist centers. Defense of those subjugated by the imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in the U.S. and other imperialist centers, pointing toward a proletarian struggle for power. The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, is committed to the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party to lead the multiracial proletariat in the struggle to sweep away U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution.

Zionist Rulers Supported Rise of Hamas

Our Marxist perspective is counterposed to those reformist socialists who reject the prospect of Arab/Hebrew workers revolution as utopian. Instead, they have vicariously cheered on one form or another of Palestinian nationalism. In 2002, when Israel was fighting the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and pummeling the Jenin refugee camp, *Workers World* had no criticism of Arafat or his calls for Western imperialist intervention into the region. Instead, an 11 April 2002 article enthused that in the wake of the first *Intifada* in the early 1990s, "Washington and Tel Aviv were forced to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization after 20 years of struggle," calling this a "victory they had won on the battlefield." In fact, the outcome of that "victory" was the Oslo accords. Today, even as Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas, while condemning the bombing of Gaza, blames Hamas for the Israeli onslaught and has suppressed protests in those areas of the West Bank that his Fatah organization controls, one will find no word of criticism of Abbas, Fatah or the Palestinian Authority in the issue of *Workers World* (15 January) containing their statement, "Support Gaza Resistance!"

One will also not find a word of criticism of Hamas. In a similar vein, the British *Socialist Worker* (10 January) of the late Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party carried an article headlined, "Hamas's History of Resistance," enthusing over Hamas as the "bearer of a tradition of Palestinian resistance."

In reality, Islamic fundamentalists like Hamas and Islamic Jihad are vile anti-Jewish and anti-Christian religious bigots who seek to enslave women and extirpate any manifestations of social progress. Hamas is descended from the clerical-fascist Muslim Brotherhood, which became particularly prominent in Egypt in the late 1940s. Under the slogan "communism=atheism=liberation of women," the Muslim Brotherhood mobilized a terror campaign against Communists and other secular forces. Hamas preaches the social segregation of women, the wearing of the *hijab* (Islamic headscarf) and anti-woman *sharia* law.

Far from embodying a "history of resistance," Hamas was initially supported by Israel as a counterweight to the secular-nationalist PLO. In 1978, Menachem Begin's right-wing government approved an application from Sheik Ahmed Yassin to license the Islamic Association, a front group of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. As an official charity organization, Yassin's group received funding from Israel. In 1986, the former military governor of Gaza, Yitzhak Segev, said: "We extend some financial aid to Islamic groups via mosques and religious schools, in order to help create a force that would stand against the leftist forces which support the PLO." Carrying out attacks on secularists and Communists, the Islamists engaged in neither political nor military struggle against Israel.

In the 1980s, the Yitzhak Shamir government set up conservative, tribal-based "Village Leagues" in the Occupied Territories. The Islamists became a force in these organs of collaboration. Israel's rulers helped the Islamic Association gain control of the Islamic University of Gaza and a base among the intelligentsia, while funding welfare programs to help the fundamentalists win a base among the poor.

With the beginning of the first *Intifada* in 1987, the Islamists feared that if they stood aside they would lose their following. Hamas was founded in the spring of 1988 as an Islamist political movement with an armed wing. Hamas sought to fuse the national struggle, previously a secular movement containing a leftist component, with reactionary Islamic fundamentalism. It was only in the fall of 1989, after discovering that Hamas killed two Israeli soldiers, that Israel broke relations with the group.

For Arab/Hebrew Workers Revolution!

Out of utter desperation, many have called on the UN or European powers to engineer some kind of cease-fire in Gaza. This has been seized upon by reformist leftists, who always promote one imperialist agency or another as a potential supporter of the Palestinians. Olivier Besancenot, spokesman for the fake-Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, denounced "the hypocrisy of the international community that votes tons of resolutions that they never apply" (*Le Monde*, 10 January). The toothless "cease-fire" resolutions that have passed the UN so far do not even call for lifting the starvation embargo against Gaza. Meanwhile, a leading spokesman of the French Communist Party has demanded that "European intervention forces are put in place between the belligerent forces" (*l'Humanité*, 30 December 2008).

It is grotesque to appeal to the European imperialists, whose bloody legacy of divide and rule laid the basis for the continuing misery of the peoples of the Near East. Following the collapse of the Turkish Ottoman Empire after the First World War, the British and French imperialists carved up the region. From Egypt to Syria and Iraq, they bloodily sup-

International Communist League
(Fourth Internationalist)

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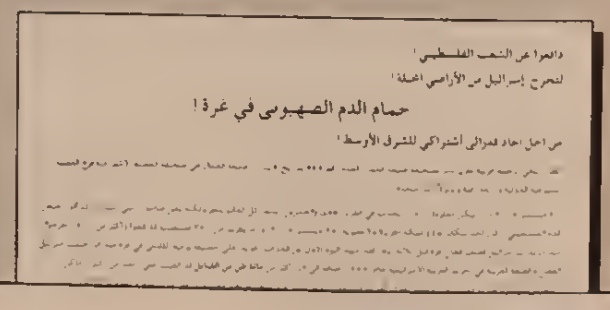

Oscar Grant...

(continued from page 12)

with the military and the prisons, as the core of a state whose purpose is the repression of the working class and oppressed by any means necessary. From the December 31 shooting of Robbie Tolan, who had been forced to lie down in the driveway of his family's Houston-area home, to the killing of Adolph Grimes III, who was shot 14 times—12 times in the back—outside his grandmother's house in New Orleans on New Year's Day, racist cop terror runs rampant in capitalist America.

For its part, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) has responded to the spate of cop killings under Dellums' "stop crime" reign with the argument that: "Rather than spending millions hiring more inexperienced cops, what would make a real difference in tackling crime would be to hit it at its roots—poverty—by rebuilding Oakland's crumbling schools and providing decent-paying jobs that would give Black, Latino and poor Oakland residents a real opportunity" (*Socialist Worker*, 14 August 2008).

The ISO's cringing faith in the capitalist rulers to provide money for jobs, education and health care at the expense of their repressive apparatus serves only to mask the true nature of this system. Those whose rule is based on exploitation shell out to those they exploit and oppress only what they can realize back in profit. And the racist rulers of America have no use for a whole generation of black youth who were once kept on the bench as a "reserve army of labor." Now what U.S. capitalism offers them is jail, a slow death from disease, malnutrition and drugs, or a fast one, gunned down on the streets by the cops or killed in the prison execution chambers of America.

The situation cries out for revolutionary leadership, to organize the social power of labor and unite behind it all the oppressed in a struggle for state power that gets rid of the whole racist capitalist system and opens the road for genuine freedom for all. This is the class-struggle perspective put forward by the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League/U.S. We reprint below a January 12 statement by the Bay Area LBL on the execution of Oscar Grant.

* * *

The election of Barack Obama as Commander-in-Chief of racist U.S. imperialism was heralded as a "breakthrough" that would "usher in a new era of race relations" in capitalist America, which was built on the bodies and blood of black slaves. But the brutal racist reality for black working people and poor was brought home on the Fruitvale BART station platform in the early hours of the New Year in the coldblooded killing of an unarmed 22-year-old black man, Oscar Grant, by BART cop Johannes Mehserle. Tens of thousands of people have recoiled in horror and rage at the raw video footage of the killing taken by passengers on the BART train in the station. Grant, an apprentice butcher at an Oakland grocery store, is lying face down on the platform with his hands behind his back. He pleads for mercy, appealing that he has a four-year-old daughter. One cop has his knee on Grant's neck when Mehserle pulls out his gun and shoots Grant pointblank in the back.

Oakland's black Democratic Party mayor Ron Dellums and an assortment of preachers and elected officials are trying to put a lid on the outrage that has ignited among the black and Latino populations

WV Photo

Protest outside Fruitvale BART station against police killing of Oscar Grant, January 10.

of Oakland, whose youth have long been on the receiving end of police terror. Dellums, who made it his priority to put more cops on Oakland streets, appealed for "peace" and offered condolences. This is pure cynicism. When Dellums' cops killed 20-year-old Gary King Jr. in September 2007, the mayor locked the door to City Hall against King's aggrieved family and friends.

The body count of those killed by the Oakland cops since Dellums took office has continued to mount: 15-year-old José Luis Buenrostro-Gonzalez, shot and killed in broad daylight, March 2008; 71-year-old Casper Banjo, a black artist, killed the same month for having a toy gun; 27-year-old Mack "Jody" Woodfox, gunned down, August 2008.

Now calls are being raised for a citizens' review board for the BART cops, better police training and more accountability. The NAACP and others appeal to California's top cop, Attorney General Jerry Brown, to investigate the killing. It was Brown who, when he took office in January 2007, had the former Black Panthers of the San Francisco 8 arrested on frame-up charges that had been thrown out over 30 years ago! We warn against deadly illusions that the police can be reformed. The purpose of cleaning up the cops' image is so that these thugs in blue can more effectively do their job as the armed enforcers of capitalist rule, from operating as an occupying army in the inner cities to busting strikes.

The reverends and black elected officials who preach "peace" in the face of rampaging cop terror now condemn those who took their justifiable outrage to the streets of Oakland. The Labor Black League for Social Defense demands that all charges be dropped against the 105 protesters who were beaten, tear-gassed, shot with rubber bullets and arrested by an army of riot-equipped cops!

The mass outrage against cop terror needs an organized political expression, and not one that strengthens the hand of the Democratic Party, the political tool of the very capitalist rulers whose interests the cops "serve and protect." The Labor Black League for Social Defense fights to link the anger of the ghettos and barrios to the power of *our class*, the multiracial labor movement. Labor protest by the Bay Area's powerful and multiracial unions—starting with the BART transit unions and including longshore, grocery, city and other workers—would provide the social power of a working-class political axis.

In 1992, when BART cop Fred Crabtree killed 19-year-old black youth Jerrold Hall with a shotgun blast through the back of his head, the Labor Black League initiated a protest in defense of Hall's friend, John Henry Owens. Crabtree was never charged, while Owens was initially outrageously charged with being an "accomplice" to "murder"! The 60-strong LBL protest, which included many workers from BART and other Bay Area unions, pointed to the kind of social power that needed to be mobilized in protest against cop terror. The response of the BART union tops provided a stark example of the trade-union bureaucracy's role in subordinating labor's power to the agencies of the capitalist class enemy, from the Democratic Party to the racist killer cops. Disowning their own union members who protested the killing of Hall and the frame-up of Owens, the then-presidents of the two BART transit unions instead ***stood in solidarity with the BART cop*** as a "union brother" who was simply doing his job! Cops are not our class brothers, but our deadly enemies. They have no place in the labor movement! Cops, security guards and prison guards out of the unions!

The recent multiracial protests against the killing of Oscar Grant are an important statement against the vicious racial and ethnic hatreds whipped up by the rulers to maintain their profits through dividing and weakening the working class. Nevertheless, the hard truth is that there will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of this entire system of capitalist exploitation and racial oppression. But a massive protest based on the organized muscle of the labor movement would give the cops and their capitalist masters some pause. And it would drive home the point that the interests of the working class are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and barrios, the defense of immigrant rights and the fight for black freedom.

The Labor Black League for Social Defense stands for mobilizing the masses of black, immigrant and all working people in integrated struggle based on a program of *class struggle*—the understanding that the interests of the working class are irreconcilably counterposed to those of the capitalist class exploiters, their state forces and agencies and their political parties, be they Democrat, Republican or Green. We join with the Spartacist League in the fight to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party that will lead the way to uprooting this system of exploitation and oppression, which is enforced by racist cop terror. When those who labor rule, the tremendous wealth of this society, created by the working class, will be used to wipe out racial oppression and provide a decent life for the working class, blacks, immigrants, women, the poor, the young and the aged.■

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pressed one anti-colonial struggle after another. Both Britain and France joined with Israel in invading Egypt in 1956 after the Egyptian government nationalized the Suez Canal. And it was the French imperialists who played a key role in assisting Israel in its development of nuclear weapons.

For its part, the United Nations is an assembly of the imperialist powers and their semicolonial victims. The UN presided over the establishment of the state of Israel at the expense of the dispossessed Palestinian people in 1948. It was the UN that disarmed Palestinian fighters during Lebanon's bloody civil war, setting up the 1982 massacre of some 2,000 civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by Christian rightist forces directed by Israeli troops under the leadership of the (now-comatose) butcher Ariel Sharon. No to UN, European Union intervention!

Every "solution" to the Palestinian national question under capitalism either perpetuates the oppression of the Palestinian Arab people or envisions a reversal of the terms of oppression, denying the legitimate national rights of the Hebrew-speaking people. The Arab nationalists and Islamists look to a "holy war" of the Arab peoples against Zionist Israel. Marxists fight to bring the class question to the fore, to mobilize the proletariat of the predominantly Muslim countries of the Near East in struggle against their own bourgeoisies. As V.I. Lenin, founder of the Bolshevik Party which led the only successful workers revolution in history, stated in 1913, "Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the 'most just,' 'purest,' most refined and civilised brand. In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism."

The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, which laid the basis for the liberation of the tsarist empire's many subjugated peoples, was a beacon of liberation for the oppressed throughout the world, inspiring anti-colonial revolts throughout the Near East. This legacy continued despite the Stalinist degeneration of the USSR. In 1958, Iraqi workers led by the multinational Iraqi Communist Party—which included Muslims, Jews and Christians, Arabs and Kurds—fought to make a revolution and came to the brink of power. However, this and other revolutionary opportunities were betrayed by the Kremlin and the Stalinist-led Communist parties, subordinating the proletariat to an alliance with "progressive" bourgeois nationalists, who, once in power, launched a bloodbath against the Communist-led workers.

What is necessary is the forging of revolutionary Marxist parties throughout the Near East, built in opposition to all forms of nationalism and religious fundamentalism, and committed to the struggle for socialist revolution, which, on an international scale, can finally open the door to human equality and liberation. As we wrote in the International Communist League Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

> "The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization. Only then will it be possible to realize the free development of each individual as the condition for the free development of all."■

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Workers Party...

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and plan to send more troops to Afghanistan. Obama's newly appointed cabinet was called by the *Wall Street Journal*, approvingly, a war cabinet. Among his advisors are bona fide war criminals Zbigniew Brzezinski, Madeleine Albright and many others. The mass murderers and torturers of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism are the enemies of working people and the oppressed worldwide.

Imperialist wars and racial, sexual and national oppression are not aberrations, but intrinsic components of capitalist rule. It is our elementary internationalist duty as revolutionary Marxists to demand the unconditional, immediate withdrawal of U.S. imperialist troops from Afghanistan, Iraq and Central Asia. We say, hands off Pakistan and Iran! In the lead-up to the imperialist attacks against Iraq and Afghanistan, we fought for the military defense of those countries while politically opposing the reactionary Taliban and Saddam Hussein's bloody capitalist regime. Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism without giving them any political support. Such blows weaken imperialism and are in the interests of the working class. We stand for the defeat of imperialism through workers revolution.

Like his allies in the capitalist Democratic Party, such as Jesse Jackson, who hark back to the liberal-led civil rights movement, Obama blames black people for their oppression. With his election, the message to black people is to shut up and take it, and to working people, it's to sacrifice. Obama has talked a lot about rebuilding the infrastructure, but the solution to the fundamental ills of moribund capitalism isn't a few band-aids, at best. It isn't spraying perfume on a walking corpse. It's the fight for a socialist planned economy that uses the talents and energies of society's most important productive force: the working class.

For many black people, pride over Obama's victory is bound up with the memory of centuries of black oppression in America—the legacy of black chattel slavery, struggles against racist Jim Crow segregation, racist cop terror and killings, desperate poverty, mass incarceration, and being the last hired and first fired. Sooner or later expectations in Obama will be brutally dashed. The growing gulf between the black petty bourgeoisie and the ghetto masses is a reflection of the sharpening class antagonisms in this society writ large. The class divide in the U.S. is unprecedented in its scope and carries with it potential social unrest. Like his black Democratic Party friend and associate David Dinkins here in New York, Obama reassures the capitalists, for a while at least, in the words of Dinkins, "they'll take it from me." The capitalist Democratic Party postures as the "friend of labor," the better to deceive the working people and keep their struggles confined within the framework of capitalism. No less than the Republicans, they are the class enemies of workers, black people, women, immigrants and all of the oppressed.

For a Class-Struggle Leadership of the Unions!

There was a recent settlement in the Chicago sit-in by workers organized in the United Electrical union for severance pay, vacation pay and health benefits. Two hundred sixty courageous workers occupied Republic Windows & Doors. They weren't fighting to keep their jobs. They were fighting because the plant was closing. They were fighting not to be dumped on the street like garbage, without any of their hard-won benefits in hand. The company has relented, but it will reopen elsewhere as a non-union outfit.

In the interests of domestic peace and tranquility, Democrats such as Jesse Jackson Jr., Luis Gutierrez, Rod Blagojevich—the ever-so-popular governor of Illinois—and Obama cynically postured as being on the side of the workers. The whole lot of them would drop their masks if there were sit-down strikes to save jobs and stop plant closings. The Flint, Michigan, sit-down strikers, in building the United Auto Workers in 1937, occupied the factories. The whole array of capitalist politicians, their cops and their state was hurled against these workers.

The relentless onslaught of union busting requires militant class struggle. Labor must play hardball to win. However, this requires a political struggle within the unions to replace the "die on your knees" trade-union bureaucracy with a leadership fighting uncompromisingly in the interests of the working class and the oppressed, independent of the capitalist parties.

Our class brothers and sisters are Mumia Abu-Jamal, Jamal Hart, the many MOVE prisoners, all the class-war prisoners entombed for their political beliefs, all those fighters imprisoned for standing up to the racist capitalist rulers. Our class brothers and sisters are immigrant workers. We fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, for a labor-led fight against deportations, for international solidarity with the struggles of working people around the world. Our class brothers and sisters are working-class and poor women who face daily, rampant sexual discrimination and oppression. We fight for women's liberation through socialist revolution; for mobilizing labor to champion women's rights; for free abortion on demand; for equal pay for equal work; for free, quality, 24-hour childcare. We defend the right of gay marriage—and divorce—against its opponents, such as Obama, Hillary Clinton, Republican gay bashers and reactionary religious bigots. This flows from our perspective to build a Leninist vanguard party that fights to cleanse this world of all oppression and exploitation.

Defend, Extend Gains of Chinese Revolution!

The Democrats are in the forefront of pushing anti-China chauvinist protectionism, backed by the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class, the labor bureaucrats who talk about "American jobs first." Liberal Democrat Nancy Pelosi and her cabal were falling all over the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan counterrevolutionaries during the riots in Tibet last March. *Workers Vanguard*, the revolutionary Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League and the flagship paper of the International Communist League, told the truth to the world's working class: the hue and cry over Tibet, joined by an assortment of reformist leftists promoting "democracy" in China, was in reality a means of promoting capitalist counterrevolution.

Dholakia/Detroit News

UAW strikers picket entrance to American Axle headquarters in Hamtramck, Michigan, 24 April 2008.

Baldorff/Grand Rapids Press

AP

Above: Renters facing eviction after building foreclosure in Michigan last summer. Right: Job fair line in New York City, November 2008.

The imperialists have been emboldened by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, which was the most formidable counterweight to U.S. imperialism. U.S. imperialism is leading the charge toward the imperialist encirclement of China, from arming its bourgeois allies in Taiwan to its nuclear pact with bourgeois India. It pursues bloody restoration of capitalism in the remaining workers states.

We are the party of the Russian Revolution. We uniquely fought against capitalist counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states. Today, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League fight for the unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea, and for workers political revolutions to replace Stalinist bureaucratic misrule with regimes of workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Racist Bosses' Black Front Men

In his heavily censored 1963 speech at the March on Washington—a march that was rightly denounced by Malcolm X as the "farce on Washington"—Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee activist John Lewis, who today is a Democrat, asked: "Where is our party?" He said that the Democratic Party of John F. Kennedy was also the party of James Eastland, a rabid Mississippi segregationist. Today the Democratic Party is Lewis's party, and he and other black ex-civil rights activists, including the likes of Maxine Waters, are front men and women for the racist capitalist system. They are the main beneficiaries of the civil rights movement, which was crippled and derailed by Martin Luther King's "turn the other cheek" pacifism and by pro-Democratic Party liberalism.

The American imperialists have opened the door for their most trusted black servants, as shown by their promotion of Condoleezza Rice and Colin Powell, to prominent positions as architects of imperialist slaughter. Now Obama gets to be the head overseer on their plantation, that is, on the plantation of the modern-day slaveholders.

Upon his capture in 1859 after he led some 20 of his followers—white and black, slave and free—to a raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, the great revolutionary insurrectionist John Brown declared: "You may dispose of me very easily—I am nearly disposed of now, but this question is still to be settled—this Negro question, I mean; the

Contents include:

- Jena Six: Racist "Justice" U.S.A.
- Mumia Abu-Jamal: The Frame-Up of an Innocent Man
- The Legacy of Richard S. Fraser
  Revolutionary Integrationism: The Road to Black Freedom
- Immigrant Rights and the Fight for Black Liberation
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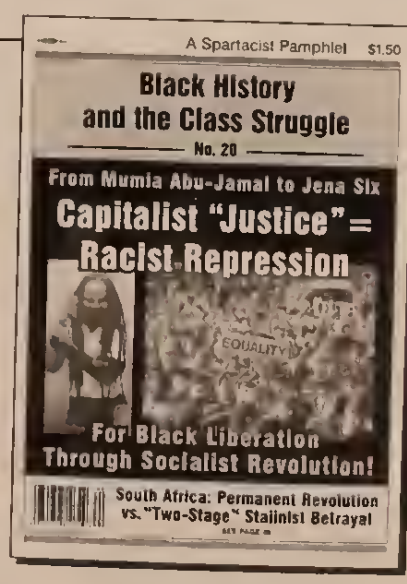

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end of that is not yet." The Civil War was the U.S.'s second bourgeois revolution, which finally settled the question of black chattel slavery. We pay homage to the revolutionary democrats of that era, the John Browns and the Frederick Douglasses and Harriet Tubmans, who were dedicated to the struggle for black liberation.

Douglass paid tribute to Brown, who "began the war that ended American slavery." Douglass and Brown were longstanding political associates, but Douglass refused to go to Harpers Ferry on tactical grounds of feasibility. Douglass subsequently declared that he himself had been deficient in courage. Nonetheless, in the aftermath of Harpers Ferry, Douglass faced charges of "murder, robbery, and inciting servile insurrection." He temporarily fled to Canada knowing that otherwise he would have been hanged.

Neither Brown nor Douglass appealed to the pro-slavery American Constitution. Their appeal was to the slaves to rise up and break their chains. We have Norman Marshall here with us to perform his tribute to John Brown—the great revolutionary abolitionist who was not only known as the Oliver Cromwell of his time, after the great 17th-century revolutionary who led the English Revolution against King Charles I, but also known by anti-slavery Frenchmen like Victor Hugo as the Spartacus of the U.S., after the Roman slave who struck fear in the hearts of the Roman slave masters.

Finish the Civil War!

The promise of black equality was betrayed by the Northern capitalists during Reconstruction, which was ended through political counterrevolution backed by Klan terror. Almost 150 years after Brown's death this question still hasn't been settled, and it can't be as long as capitalism continues to exist. The oppression of the black masses as a race-color caste, forcibly segregated at the bottom of society but constituting a key component of organized labor, is the strategic question for proletarian revolution in the U.S. Our program of revolutionary integrationism, the struggle for the full assimilation of black people into an egalitarian socialist order, is based upon the understanding that black oppression is materially rooted in this capitalist system, and that black workers, as the most conscious and experienced section of the working class, will play an exceptional role in leading the working class to topple this brutal system.

Schomburg Center

Frederick Douglass House

John Brown (left), Harpers Ferry martyr, and leading black abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

The struggle for black freedom is an inseparable part of the fight for the emancipation of the working class from capitalist exploitation. Contrary to the lies of bourgeois ideologists, white workers have common class interests with black workers, the ghetto poor and immigrant workers, not with the white ruling class. Militant class struggle can and will break down the color line. Many of us saw that in action during the powerful but brief New York City transit workers strike almost three years ago.

It was no accident that thousands of black and poor people were left to die in Hurricane Katrina. Millions of workers and, increasingly, middle-class professionals are losing jobs and homes and pensions under this so-called "sacred" private property system. The right to a job is, as the Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky once stated, "the workers' most serious right." We need a revolutionary leadership of labor that will mobilize the power of the working class. Such a leadership will organize the unorganized, fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work, fight for socialized medicine, for free quality health care, for massive public works programs, for unemployment benefits.

These struggles must ultimately lead to the fight for international socialist revolution, which requires the expropriation of the capitalist class without compensation, just like the expropriation of the Southern slaveholders during the Civil War. Just as you had to be a revolutionary abolitionist to be in the vanguard of the struggle to end black chattel slavery, today you have to be a communist, a revolutionary internationalist, a Trotskyist, to uproot the system of capitalist wage slavery. It is utopian to think that you can get the capitalists to reorder their priorities by pressuring them and/or appealing to their so-called conscience. They will put nothing before their class interests. Their class rule is enforced by their repressive bourgeois state apparatus, their cops, courts and military.

We don't need the "audacity of hope" or pie-in-the-sky religious obscurantism, but a consistent revolutionary internationalist program. Our battle cry is for multiracial class struggle against all of the exploiters, no matter what their color or their sex, against the barbaric and anarchic and decrepit capitalist system! We say, free all class-war prisoners! Long live the struggle for international proletarian revolution! Workers of the world unite—you have nothing to lose but your chains!■

Sam Marcy...

(continued from page 2)

"third parties," see "From the Archives of *Spartacist*: On Bourgeois 'Third Parties' and the 1948 Henry Wallace Campaign," *WV* No. 918, 1 August 2008).

The predominant pro-Wallace movement grouping inside the SWP in 1948 was "the Chicago N.C. [National Committee] Members," whose 21 January 1948 resolution on "The Wallace Third Party Movement" by Arne Swabeck and two cothinkers in Chicago was printed in the SWP's "Pre-Convention Discussion Material" *Internal Bulletin* (Vol. X, No. 2, April 1948). As the bitterly repressive winds of the first Cold War were blowing, Swabeck and his supporters cited the "reactionary onslaught" against labor, claiming that "the Wallace Third Party movement...is the first concrete, although distorted, manifestation of contradictions engendered by the American imperialist aims." The Chicago N.C. members claimed, wrongly, that "in its classic sense a third capitalist party could be conceived of only in the emergence of the pro-fascist or fascist party," and since the Wallace movement obviously wasn't fascist, therefore "leftward moving workers" would become the base, forcing it into becoming a labor party. While conceding Wallace was "a capitalist, and he admits it," they wrote: "The movement rallying around his candidacy is something else. Either it is predominantly working class in character or it will disappear." They concluded: "These are the important considerations upon which our party should base its decision to give critical support to the Wallace candidacy for the purpose of entering into active participation in this new movement."

Another document in the bulletin, "Statement on Wallace Movement" by C. Charles, M. Weiss and M. Tanner (Charles Curtis, Murry Weiss and Myra Tanner Weiss) correctly stated: "The Wallace movement is a capitalist political tendency, at present resting nearly exclusively on Stalinist dominated unions and their political organs and Stalinist organizations." Noting that the Wallace campaign "represents another obstacle to the independent labor party," they nonetheless argued: "Our problem, and the central question for the next period, is how to struggle against the capitalist and Stalinist influence in these formations. Can we do it from outside the Wallace organization? To a degree, but more effectively from within." They argued for no support to Wallace himself, but stated: "There will be candidates from the labor movement and from the Negro and other oppressed peoples whom we should critically support." A document by "Burton" argued similarly for participation in the Wallace movement without supporting Wallace. The February 1948 Plenum of the SWP upheld SWP leader James P. Cannon's majority line of no support to Wallace, and the Chicago N.C. members withdrew their resolution.

As for Sam Marcy, five years after the 1948 debate, he wrote in "The Global Class War and the Destiny of American Labor" (SWP *Internal Bulletin* Vol. XV, No. 15, May 1953): "The Wallace movement was a progressive-radical movement in spite of Wallace.... It would ***not*** have been 'crossing class lines' to give critical support to Wallace. It would only have been supporting Wallace as Lenin said 'a rope supports a hanged man.' It would have been reaching out our hand toward elements of ***our own class*** we could not reach in any other way except through critical support of Wallace. (This, as everybody on the NC knows, was my position, and it flowed from the international orientation I also elaborated at that Plenum)."

Understanding the breadth of SWP internal opposition on this issue, Cannon's majority response, which we've often quoted ("Election Policy in 1948," February 1948), is even more impressive and well worth repeating—it is another of those defining fights whose successful outcome helped to ensure our existence as revolutionary Marxists today:

> "The class character of the party is determined first by its program; secondly by its actual policy in practice; and thirdly by its composition and control. The Wallace party is bourgeois on all these counts; by its program, its policy and practice, its composition and control....Wallace is the, as yet, unacknowledged, candidate for the role of diverting the workers' movement for independent political action into the channel of bourgeois politics dressed up with radical demagogy which costs nothing. That is what we have to say, and that's what we have to fight—vigorously and openly, and with no qualifications at all. We have to be 100% anti-Wallaceites. We have to stir up the workers against this imposter, and explain to them that they will never get a party of their own by accepting substitutes."

Pathfinder

James P. Cannon speaking at 1940 convention of the Socialist Workers Party.

Part of Cannon's response to the internal opposition on Wallace was to propose that the SWP run its own candidates in the 1948 presidential elections, in order to counterpose the SWP's revolutionary proletarian program to the pro-Democratic Party class collaborationism of the Stalinists. This was consistent with the previous practice of U.S. Marxists at the time. However, upon further historical examination, debate and discussion, we in the International Communist League have decided that we will not run for executive offices of the bourgeois state as a matter of principle. This is a corollary to Lenin's works, *The State and Revolution* and *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, and a continuation of the work of the first four Congresses of the Communist International (see "Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!" in the April 2008 ICL pamphlet, *The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution*).

The documentary record available to us is thin on whether the Marcyites had become an established "tendency" by 1948. Speaking at a memorial for WWP cofounder Vince Copeland on 20 June 1993, Marcy did say: "I want to talk about the struggles that took place beginning with 1948. Our tendency had just been formed politically on the basis of strong conviction and commitment to preserve the revolutionary essence of the struggle, in particular as it began to develop around the global class struggle." Much later, Lou Paulsen, a frequent contributor to *Workers World*, wrote a January 2003 Internet "Open letter to Dave McReynolds" that stated: "WWP was founded at the beginning of 1959.... If, however, you mean to refer to the point at which the Marcy-Copeland-Ballan tendency began to coalesce and express differences with the leadership of the SWP-US (whom you refer to as 'the Trotskyists') it would have to be 1948, when our future founders recommended participation in the presidential campaign of Henry Wallace."

Claiming such an origin would naturally be more appealing to liberals than what we know as the definitive formation of Sam Marcy's pro-Stalinist faction in the SWP: their response to the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, when a document by V. Grey (Vince Copeland) characterized the unfolding workers political revolution there as a "full-scale, nation-wide ***counterrevolution***," thus providing an apology for its suppression. The Marcyites' condemnation of the Hungarian uprising—which posed the possibility of the democratic rule of workers soviets and the establishment of a workers government committed to the international extension of the gains of the Hungarian workers state—was part of their evolving Stalinoid class collaborationism. In 1989, WWP supported the suppression of the Tiananmen uprising in China, which was also an incipient workers political revolution.

Historically for Stalinists there's no contradiction between sucking up to bourgeois liberals in the heartland of imperialism and sycophantic support to Stalinist regimes and their policies of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and anti-working-class repression. Both are ultimately based on their rejection of the need for the working class, led by a revolutionary vanguard party, to fight for international socialist revolution.

Comradely,
H.C.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Mobilize the Power of the Multiracial Unions in Protest!

Oscar Grant Killed in Cold Blood by BART Cop

OAKLAND, January 12—Seething anger against rampant, and routine, humiliation and terror at the hands of the racist cops was ignited in Oakland, California, over the coldblooded execution of a 22-year-old black man, Oscar Grant, by a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) cop on January 1. The killing of Grant was a shot literally heard round the world in multiple video clips by other passengers in the station which were streamed online.

"We Are All Oscar Grant," declared signs and chants at a January 7 protest of more than 700 people—including blacks, Latinos, Asians and whites—outside the Fruitvale BART station where Grant was killed. Pointing to the Zionist military onslaught in the Gaza Strip, other signs called to "End Government Sponsored Murder in the Ghettos of Oakland and Palestine." Rage and despair in the face of the tired appeals for "calm" and deadly illusions in "police reform" peddled by black elected officials and preachers exploded in the streets of downtown Oakland later that night. The Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—sent a protest letter demanding that all charges he dropped against the more than 100 protesters who were beaten and arrested by an army of riot-equipped cops.

Indymedia

Johnson Family

Passenger video showed BART cop killing of Oscar Grant (inset).

While his cops fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters, black Democratic Party Oakland mayor Ron Dellums promised to bring the Oakland Police Department into the "investigation" of Grant's murder. That will be a gigantic boost to the cover-up machine that BART has already set in motion. In 2002, three cops from the notorious Oakland police gang, the "Riders," which was unleashed as part of the racist "war on drugs," were completely exonerated of 60 counts of savage beatings and frame-ups. Meanwhile, the Oakland cops continued to gun down young black and Latino men with impunity. In this case, the BART cop who killed Grant has opted to resign while the Feds and California attorney general Jerry Brown are intervening to try to keep a lid on "tensions."

At the Oakland protest, placards from the ANSWER coalition, led by the reformist Party for Socialism and Liberation, called to "Jail Killer Cops!" In your dreams. The capitalist rulers are hardly going to jail their own police guard dogs. And, even if one cop were charged and imprisoned, it wouldn't stop police brutality and terror. The cops serve, together

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Break with the Democrats!

For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

In December, the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—held its 23rd annual Holiday Appeal, which raised funds for the PDC's program of sending monthly stipends and holiday gifts to 16 class-war prisoners and their families. Holiday Appeal events took place in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, the Bay Area and Toronto. Spokesmen for the Spartacist League, Spartacus Youth Clubs, Labor Black Leagues and the PDC addressed these benefits. In Chicago, one of the laid-off members of United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 1110 spoke about the courageous six-day plant sit-in at the Republic Windows & Doors factory in Chicago (see "UE Workers Win Severance Pay," WV No. 927, 2 January).

More than 150 people attended the New York Holiday Appeal event, held on December 13 at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe. The benefit included the one-man play John Brown: Trumpet of Freedom, *by George Wolf Reily and Norman Thomas Marshall (who performed the play). The following speech, edited for publication, was delivered at this event by SL Central Committee member Don Alexander.*

In about a month, U.S. imperialism's first black Commander-in-Chief will take office. The ascendancy to power of Democrat Barack Obama's administration is no historic victory against racism, as the liberals and reformists say, but a victory for the bourgeoisie. Obama offers the capitalists a more effective means to implement their imperialist interests. His message of "national unity" patriotism is a program of lining up the working class behind the interests of its "own" ruling class. Who benefits? The capitalists. That's why a significant section of the bourgeoisie put their money on him. In the face of worldwide capitalist economic crisis, Obama and the Democrats embraced, with minor modifications, the Bush administration's plan to transfer $700 billion of taxpayers' money to the banks and other financial institutions.

As Marxists we are fighting to build an internationalist revolutionary workers party like the one that the Bolsheviks built under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, the one that led the workers to power in the October 1917 socialist revolution. That is our model: a vanguard party that is a tribune of the people. Such a party has no separate interests from the working class, but constitutes its most advanced detachment. It educates and organizes the most conscious workers and leads behind it all of the oppressed. We are opposed on principle to giving any political support to any capitalist party, whether the Democrats, the Republicans or the Greens. Unlike the reformist left, from the International Socialist Organization to Workers World, we were forthright in our opposition to Obama, Hillary Clinton, John McCain and Cynthia McKinney.

Democrats: Party of Racism and War

The bloody U.S. imperialist occupation of Iraq, despite its much heralded and much hallyhooed surge, has bogged down and damaged U.S. imperialism's credibility and tarnished its "democratic" pretensions. Obama and the Democrats want a more effective "war on terror"

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For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 929 | C-701 | 30 January 2009

As Reformists Fawn

Barack Obama Takes Helm of Racist U.S. Imperialism

AP

Reuters

Reuters

Military parades before U.S. Commander-in-Chief Obama during inauguration, January 20. Left: U.S. Marines in Afghanistan, May 2008. Right: U.S. occupation forces in Baquba, Iraq, November 2008.

Break with the Democrats! For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

In the inauguration of Barack Obama, the first black president of the United States, the U.S. imperialist ruling class has gained an effective executive for pursuing its bloody aims abroad and its exploitation of working people at home. Indeed, as the shameless hosannas to the new Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism by the reformist "socialists" demonstrate, Obama has breathed new life into their false claim that capitalism can be reformed. After eight years of the despised Bush administration, the hype about "hope" and the lie of "national unity" had broad appeal. But from the standpoint of the interests of the international working class, this is *nothing to celebrate*.

Enthusiasm among significant sections of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, is justified, as they have in Obama a more rational face for their irrational and barbaric system. At a time when unemployment figures are at the worst in decades, when home foreclosures have devastated the lives of massive numbers of working people, when the wounds of the racist atrocity in the face of Hurricane Katrina are still all-too-fresh in New Orleans, when education, health care and basic infrastructure lie in shambles, large numbers of the populace—whites, blacks, Latinos and others—sought relief in a change of administration. Obama's election refurbished the trapping of bourgeois electoral "democracy," the method by which the U.S rulers seek to disguise their brutal class rule under the appearance of a popular mandate.

There's no denying that the inauguration was unprecedented: The sight of a black man taking the oath of office, with his wife, the descendant of slaves, holding the Bible, brought many to tears, given America's bitter origins in slavery—with lynchings and Jim Crow segregation still burnt into the memory of the living. Thus the "honeymoon" period and the illusions in this "new face" of U.S. imperialism are likely to be more prolonged than usual, especially among the youth and blacks who support Obama.

The somber reality is that Obama's ascension to the highest office in the land will do *nothing* to relieve the continuing nightmare of racial oppression for the mass of the black population. That oppression is structurally embedded in American capitalism and will not be overcome short of socialist revolution. As we warned in the run-up to the presidential election (*WV* No. 920, 12 September 2008), "Obama serves as a very powerful propaganda weapon for the bourgeoisie, telling black people and the oppressed to shut up and stop complaining, because, you see, 'the American dream' works!"

We have repeatedly warned that Obama's election would provide a much needed facelift for U.S. imperialism. And, indeed, in many parts of the world, his inauguration was greeted with euphoria. A column by Jonathan Freedland in the Johannesburg *Mail & Guardian* online (24 January), a South African bourgeois paper, gushed that the scene of his inauguration at the Mall in Washington showed America "as a nation that cherishes its unique experiment in self-government and still believes that even the darkest chapters of its past can be transcended." This sentiment was also expressed by the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), whose editorial "Looking Forward to Change" (*Socialist Worker* online, 21 January) gushed that Obama's election is "a reason to believe that change *is* possible" and that "some of the cruel sins of America's past were finally being overcome."

Support for Obama is widespread among black people. At the same time, class divisions within the black population have become very sharp, marked by the growing gulf between the small minority consisting of the black petty bourgeoisie, who went through the gates opened by the gains of the civil rights movement, and black workers and the massive "underclass" of the permanently unemployed, swollen through the devastation of American industry. Especially the upper crust of the black petty bourgeoisie could very well see material benefits from Obama's victory, which broke a "glass ceiling." But for the black proletariat and the masses in the ghettos, conditions of life are already being further devastated. Just as it was another popular Democratic president, Bill Clinton, who ended "welfare as we know it," where prior Republican administrations had failed, Obama today is in a better position to extract further "sacrifice" from working people in the midst of the deepening recession.

Craven reformists like Teresa Gutierrez of the Stalinoid Workers World Party (WWP) raved that Obama's victory was "a triumph for the Black masses and all the oppressed," writing in *Workers World* (20 November 2008):

> "As communists and revolutionaries we take joy with the oppressed and other progressives as they gather in jubilation from Harlem to Colombia to Japan to Kenya with the election of Obama.... Our love of the oppressed masses—like our solidarity with the working class—extends even when it involves the presidency of the strongest imperialist country ever."

WWP is here openly embracing the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, the top cop responsible for the most massive military power in history and for the domestic machinery of repression that maintains social oppression and exploitation! WWP and other reformists promote the illusion that working people and the oppressed can lay hold of the machinery of the capitalist state and wield it for their own interests. But the

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PDC Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

Outrage! Hugo Pinell Denied Parole

On January 14, the California Board of Parole denied Hugo Pinell parole for the ninth time—and declared that he will not have another parole board hearing for *15 years!* Pinell, the last of the San Quentin Six still in prison, is 63 years old and has been in prison since he was 19. Despite having no disciplinary write-ups for 27 years, he has spent the last 39 years in solitary confinement, 19 of them in the notoriously brutal Security Housing Unit of the Pelican Bay dungeon, where he is subjected to high-tech sensory deprivation: 23 to 24 hours a day in a small cell, no windows, no natural light, no contact visits and prolonged isolation. The capitalist rulers have kept Pinell locked down because he remains true to his vision of a society finally rid of racist repression.

Pinell, who immigrated from Nicaragua at age 12, was locked up in 1965. In the late '60s he became a leader of a developing movement in the California prisons against wretched conditions and racist abuse. He was a student and close comrade of George Jackson, the imprisoned Black Panther spokesman. The prisoners' movement, which was met with heavy repression, reflected the intense struggles taking place outside the prison walls, from the "black power" movement to radical protests against the war in Vietnam. Pinell and five others—the San Quentin Six—were framed up on charges of conspiracy murder stemming from the killing of three prison guards in the protests that erupted after the assassination of Jackson in the San Quentin prison yard on 21 August 1971. Pinell represented himself at the 18-month-long trial and was convicted of two counts of assault.

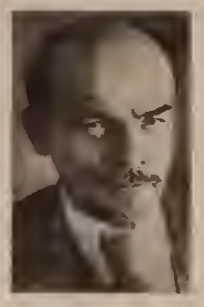
The parole board's decision to deny Pinell parole for another 15 years was made possible by the grotesquely reactionary Proposition 9, passed in the November 2008 elections. Under previous California law, Pinell would have to be given another hearing within two years. Proposition 9, dubbed a "victims' bill of rights," rewrote a whole section of the state constitution, as well as state penal law, in order to bolster the repressive powers of the state and further eviscerate the rights of those charged or convicted by the racist capitalist criminal injustice system. The ballot initiative was bankrolled with $4.8 million by sleazy billionaire Henry Nicholas III, who last year was indicted on securities fraud and other charges, such as drug-

hugopinell.org

ging his customers' representatives. In 2004, Nicholas also pumped in $3.5 million in a last-minute campaign to defeat Proposition 66, which would have rolled back some of the provisions of California's notorious, draconian 1994 "Three Strikes" law.

For over 20 years, Hugo Pinell has been one of the class-war prisoners supported by the Partisan Defense Committee's monthly stipend program. As the PDC noted in a recent letter to the California parole board, in 2006 "a commissioner berated Mr. Pinell saying 'you continue to show no remorse...'. This is a common ruse for denying parole for political prisoners. Mr. Pinell has no reason for 'remorse' for his commendable political convictions." The fight to free Pinell and all the other class-war prisoners is part of the fight against the whole system of exploitation and repression inherent in capitalist rule. ***Free Hugo Pinell now!*** ■

TROTSKY



LENIN

Defend the Cuban Revolution!

Fifty years ago, as Fidel Castro's Rebel Army marched into Havana in January 1959, the bourgeois army and the rest of the capitalist state apparatus that had propped up the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista shattered. In the face of the hostile encirclement of U.S. imperialism, the Castro regime in 1960-61 expropriated the Cuban bourgeoisie as a class, creating a bureaucratically deformed workers state. Ever since, the U.S. ruling class has worked relentlessly to overthrow the gains of the Cuban Revolution and re-establish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

From the time of its inception as the Revolutionary Tendency in the Socialist Workers Party, which was undergoing political degeneration toward reformism, the Spartacist League has fought for unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy and to establish a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism. The following excerpts are from a document submitted by the Revolutionary Tendency to the 1963 Convention of the Socialist Workers Party, which had given open political support to the Castro bureaucracy.

13. The Cuban Revolution has exposed the vast inroads of revisionism upon our movement. On the pretext of defense of the Cuban Revolution, in itself an obligation for our movement, full unconditional and uncritical support has been given to the Castro government and leadership, despite its petit-bourgeois nature and bureaucratic behavior. Yet the record of the regime's opposition to the democratic rights of the Cuban workers and peasants is clear: bureaucratic ouster of the democratically-elected leaders of the labor movement and their replacement by Stalinist hacks; suppression of the Trotskyist press; proclamation of the single-party system; and much else. This record stands side by side with enormous initial social and economic accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution. Thus Trotskyists are at once the most militant and unconditional defenders against imperialism of both the Cuban Revolution and of the deformed workers' state which has issued therefrom. But Trotskyists cannot give confidence and political support, however critical, to a governing regime hostile to the most elementary principles and practices of workers' democracy, even if our tactical approach is not as toward a *hardened* bureaucratic caste....

15. Experience since the Second World War has demonstrated that peasant-based guerrilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-working-class bureaucratic regime. The creation of such regimes has come about under the conditions of decay of imperialism, the demoralization and disorientation caused by Stalinist betrayals, and the absence of revolutionary Marxist leadership of the working class. Colonial revolution can have an unequivocally progressive significance only under such leadership of the revolutionary proletariat. For Trotskyists to incorporate into their strategy revisionism on the *proletarian* leadership in the revolution is a profound negation of Marxism-Leninism no matter what pious wish may be concurrently expressed for "building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries." Marxists must resolutely oppose any adventurist acceptance of the peasant-guerilla road to socialism—historically akin to the Social Revolutionary program on tactics that Lenin fought. This alternative would be a suicidal course for the socialist goals of the movement, and perhaps physically for the adventurers.

—Revolutionary Tendency, "Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International" (June 1963), *Marxist Bulletin* No. 9

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No. 929 **30 January 2009**

Savagely Beaten in Prison

Free Leonard Peltier!

Worthington/Toronto Sun

In January, Leonard Peltier, a leader of the American Indian Movement who has been in prison for 33 years for a crime he did not commit, was outrageously put in solitary confinement after having been savagely attacked when he was transferred to the United States Penitentiary in Canaan, Pennsylvania. In a January 20 statement, Betty Peltier-Solano, Peltier's sister, stated: "We feel that prison authorities at the prompting of the FBI orchestrated this attack and thus, we are greatly concerned about his safety." We print below a January 22 protest letter from the Partisan Defense Committee to USP Canaan warden Ronne R. Holt. The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

It has come to our attention that soon after his transfer to your prison, political prisoner Leonard Peltier was placed in solitary confinement and allowed only one meal a day. This is an outrage. Given this courageous man's medical conditions, your actions put his life at risk.

Mr. Peltier had asked that he be transferred to a facility near his family and home in the Dakotas. Instead he was vindictively sent far away to USP Canaan. Shortly after his arrival he was set upon and brutally beaten, reportedly by prisoners he did not know. He sustained numerous bruises, a large lump on his head, discoloration and swelling to his hands as well as pain in his chest and ribcage. This incident is the supposed pretext for his being thrown into solitary.

Mr. Peltier is an innocent man who has been unjustly incarcerated for nearly 33 years because of his activism in defense of the rights of Native Americans. During that period his health has seriously deteriorated. He suffers from high blood pressure, a heart condition, failing eyesight and diabetes. As he is at risk for kidney failure, blindness and/or amputation, it is critical that Mr. Peltier be released from solitary confinement immediately and afforded all necessary medical treatment.

We, along with millions of others, do not believe that Leonard Peltier should have been incarcerated at all. We demand his unconditional release from prison. ■

CORRECTION

The photo caption on page 9 of the article "Oscar Grant Killed in Cold Blood by BART Cop" in *WV* No. 928 (January 16) mistakenly states that the protest outside the Fruitvale BART station occurred on January 10. It took place on January 7, as stated in the article.

India

AP photos

Above: Protester wounded in bloody rampage by cops and CPI(M) thugs in Nandigram, 14 March 2007. Right: Police attack July 2007 Kolkata protest following rape and murder of young woman activist Tapasi Malik by CPI(M) members.

The Nandigram Massacre

"Left Front" Government's State Repression in West Bengal

The following article is reprinted from Spartacist Canada *(No. 159, Winter 2008/2009), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

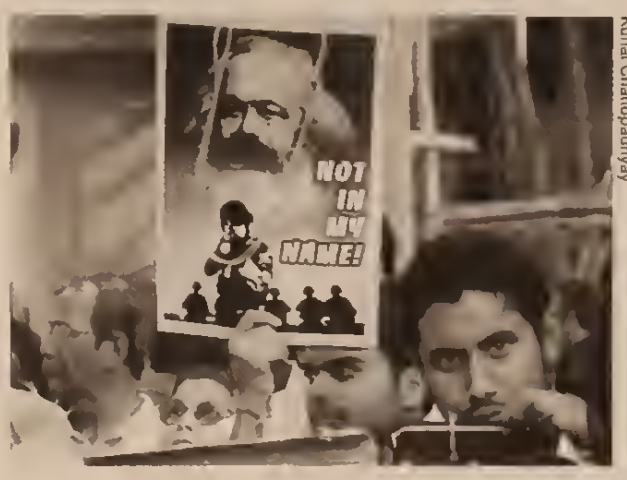
The Communist Party of Canada (CPC), long skilled in justifying working-class betrayals, has now taken up the cudgels for the capitalist government of West Bengal headed by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI[M]). Last spring the correspondent in India for the CPC's *People's Voice*, B. Prasant, claimed that the state budget of the Left Front government "prioritises the empowerment of the poor." The government, he reported, was buying land and "handing it over to small peasants at no cost" (1-15 April 2008). The October 16-31 issue had Prasant hailing the government's "pro-employment and pro-poor industrial policy" in Singur, a rural area not far from Kolkata (Calcutta).

"Paper will put up with anything that is written on it," as J.V. Stalin once wrote. Schooled for decades in the program of Stalinist class collaboration and the lies it entails, the CPC should know. The truth is that for the last two years, far from giving land to peasants and "empowering" the poor, the CPI(M) has made Singur and nearby Nandigram synonymous with bloody state repression—murders, rapes, beatings, mass arrests and land seizures, all to serve the greater glory of capitalist profit.

In 2005, India loosened the regulations governing the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), sparking a frenzied real estate boom as central and state governments invoked the 1894 Land Acquisition Act, a relic of the British imperialists enacted to smooth the forcible acquisition of land and minimize the cost. More than 500 SEZs have been approved around the country. Highly capital intensive, the SEZs employ a tiny fraction of the vast numbers they have displaced and ruined. To ensure untrammelled profits, strikes and protests are banned inside SEZs and taxation is minimal.

Quick to cash in on the SEZ craze, in December 2006 the Left Front government in West Bengal moved to create an SEZ in Singur, forcibly acquiring land there on behalf of Tata Motors, one of India's largest capitalist conglomerates. Those who resisted were severely beaten and some 50 arrested. Reportedly led by CPI(M) spotters, houses were ransacked and haystacks burned. Later that month the charred body of a young woman activist, Tapasi Malik, 18, was found. She had been brutally raped and murdered. A full year passed before two CPI(M) workers were charged with this savage crime (Indo-Asian News Service, 7 December 2007).

Singur proved to be merely the opening act. In Nandigram, in late December 2006, villagers learned that 25,000 acres of arable land were to be taken to create an SEZ for a massive chemical industrial complex. There was an immediate outcry. On 7 January 2007, a protest organized by the Bhumi Uchched Pratirodh (Land Eviction Resistance) Committee (BUPC) was attacked as CPI(M) cadre shot bullets and hurled bombs into the village, killing at least five. Foreshadowing what was to come, CPI(M) State Secretariat member Benoy Konar railed, "But if they want to make things difficult for us, we are prepared to make life hell for them" (*Nandigram: What Really Happened?* [2007]).



Kunal Chattopadhyay

14 November 2007 protest in Kolkata against Nandigram massacre. Left Front's state repression has shattered illusions of many in CPI(M).

In the early morning of March 14, some 5-6,000 unarmed residents of Nandigram assembled in an attempt to prevent government forces from entering the area. On the other side a 2,000-strong police force and several hundred armed CPI(M) cadre, some in police uniform, launched an assault, blinding people with tear gas and then opening fire. The official count put the dead at 14, with over 200 injured. Others put the number of dead at more than 100. The true toll may never be known: a reporter for the civil rights journal *Combat Law* (May-June 2007) was told by villagers that cops and CPI(M) goons hauled off bodies in trucks or buried them nearby under a newly repaired road.

What is known is that this attack was planned months in advance. Women and children, who were in the forefront of the protest in the mistaken belief that this would stay the hand of the police and CPI(M) goons, bore the brunt of the onslaught. Wrenching evidence was later given at hearings in Kolkata to a "People's Tribunal on Nandigram" organized by the All India Citizens' Initiative. Some women were raped and there were at least five cases of "sadistic sexual assault"; several women accused policemen of "forcing rod/lathi/gunbarrel into sex organs" ("Executive Summary of the Report: People's Tribunal on Nandigram," 26-28 May 2007). Others were told of children being "torn apart, hurled into ponds and killed" (*Combat Law*, May-June 2007). Of 38 missing, eleven were children. This is the horrific reality that *People's Voice* hopes to hide in its lying hosannas to the West Bengal CPI(M) government.

While covering up this massacre, *People's Voice* portrays the CPI(M) as a party under siege from "elements of the reactionary right and the sectarian left" which are "using murder and mayhem" (1-15 September 2008). In reality, Nandigram has been the site of a virtual small-scale civil war as the inhabitants have faced down repeated attacks from police and CPI(M) thugs acting on behalf of the bourgeois state.

The chemical hub in Nandigram—now on hold—was to have been built by the Indonesian Salim Group, whose founder was infamous for his close ties with the Suharto regime which killed some one million Communists and their supporters in 1965-66 following a military coup. Happy to front for such butchers, the CPI(M) says it is promoting development that will better the lives of the masses and indeed be a "weapon of class struggle." But no amount of such Marxoid mumbo jumbo can hide that this is a ***capitalist*** government in a ***capitalist*** country. No less a mouthpiece for imperialist finance capital than the London *Economist* pointed out in an article titled "The Capitalist Communist" that CPI(M) chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya "has embraced business with an apostate zeal...travelling the world and wooing foreign companies" (24 November 2007).

Only Workers Revolution Will Liberate the Indian Masses!

The idea that capitalist development in a country like India (or anywhere else for that matter) could be other than brutal and exploitative is a lie pushed by the bourgeoisie and their reformist frontmen. India is a country of enormous social contradictions where modern industry is grafted onto a backward society marked by profound women's oppression as well as national, religious and caste oppression—the heritage of the pre-industrial past, reinforced and deepened by more than two centuries of British colonial rule.

Imperialist subjugation foreclosed any possibility of the Indian bourgeoisie

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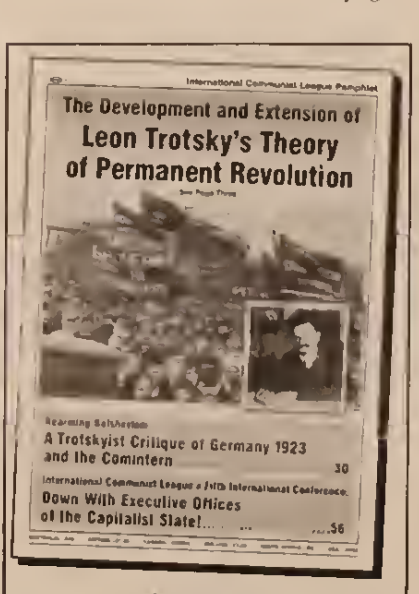

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India...

(continued from page 3)

playing the historical role of the bourgeoisies of Western Europe in liberating and developing the productive forces from feudal backwardness. The perspective for resolving the questions posed by what Bolshevik revolutionary Leon Trotsky termed "combined and uneven development" is provided by the theory and program of permanent revolution, developed by Trotsky and vindicated by the victory of the 1917 Russian Revolution (see "The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution," ICL Pamphlet [2008]).

In a country like India where development is belated and strangled by imperialist subjugation, the weak national bourgeoisie is dependent on its imperialist masters—yesterday the British, today the U.S.—and above all fears its "own" working class. The only road to liberation for the subjugated masses lies in the successful struggle of the proletariat for state power, at the head of all the oppressed, especially the vast peasantry, under the leadership of a revolutionary workers party. An Indian workers revolution would spark a revolutionary upsurge throughout the subcontinent, from Pakistan to Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Its survival and advancement would hinge on the achievement of social revolutions in the imperialist centers: Japan, North America and West Europe.

This is emphatically not the perspective of the Indian variants of Stalinism, including Maoism. Stalinism as an ideology arose in the Soviet workers state following the defeat of the post-1917 revolutionary wave in Europe. Beginning in 1923-24 a conservative bureaucratic caste which came to be led by Stalin usurped political power from the proletariat. Among its greatest crimes against the world working class was the resurrection of a variant of the class-collaborationist Menshevik program which had been defeated and discredited in the victorious 1917 Revolution. The Stalinist dogma of "two-stage revolution," in which the masses are tied to a mythical "progressive" bourgeoisie in a first, supposedly "democratic" stage of struggle, has brought bloody defeat to struggling workers and peasants around the world.

Over the decades, both before and after independence, the Stalinized Communist Party of India (CPI) has often given support to the bourgeois Congress Party and the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. The CPI(M), which issued from the CPI in 1964, continues this pattern of class collaboration. At the head of the Left Front, it has ruled West Bengal continuously since 1977, wielding the repressive powers of the bourgeois state in defense of private property and profit over a deeply impoverished population. At the all-India level, both CPs have continued to back Congress and its allies, including

Ferguson/Time

Vast slum in Mumbai next to modern airport facility.

until recently the Congress-dominated United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in New Delhi. This is the political logic of the bankrupt program of "revolution by stages." Whether labelled the "National Democratic Revolution" or the "People's Democratic Revolution," the masses remain brutally oppressed by capitalism and the supposed second, socialist stage never comes.

Many of those who have harboured illusions in the capacity of the CPI(M) to bring progress and a better life to the masses of West Bengal have been shaken by the atrocities in Nandigram. The months after the massacre saw a wave of resignations from the party, and heavy electoral losses in its former rural strongholds followed this year. Most of these losses were to the virulent anti-Communists of the Trinamool Congress, which has also been the main force in the BUPC-organized protests in Nandigram. In a rotten class-collaborationist alliance, this "resistance committee" is also supported by the Socialist Unity Centre of India, one of the country's many Maoist groups.

Another group, the CPI (Maoist), also claims to provide an alternative to the Left Front's SEZ policy. But their program of "New Democratic Revolution" and "People's War" is no less bankrupt than that of the CPI(M) and CPI. Basing themselves on the peasantry, not the proletariat, the Maoists call for a "bloc of four classes" including with so-called "progressive" capitalists. In *The State and Revolution* and many other works, Lenin savaged the idea that the class interests of the bourgeoisie and proletariat were anything other than irreconcilable.

It is necessary to break with this deeply ingrained class collaborationism which has long branded India's various Communist Parties and their offshoots. The history of the international working-class struggle against capitalist wage slavery abounds with betrayals by Stalinism, whose anti-Marxist dogma of "socialism in one country" has meant pursuit of the pipedream of "peaceful coexistence" with world imperialism and opposition to the struggle for international socialist revolution. As well as "two-stage" betrayal, it has also meant forming and supporting popular-front governments—political blocs with capitalist parties in which the politics of the working class are necessarily subordinated to those of the bourgeoisie. Too often workers have paid with their lives for the treacherous policies of their leaders.

In Indonesia this program brought the destruction of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in 1965-66. The Chinese Maoists instructed the PKI—the largest Communist party in the capitalist world, with three million members and many times that number of supporters—to maintain at all costs a political bloc with the "anti-imperialist" regime of Sukarno, an ally of Beijing. The PKI adopted a policy of "national unity" with the Indonesian bourgeoisie and its military, even to the point of forcing workers to return to the capitalists the factories they had seized. With the workers politically lulled by the misleadership of Beijing and the PKI, the Indonesian military staged a coup led by General Suharto, ushering in the horrific bloodbath of Communists and their sympathizers. (See "Lessons of Indonesia 1965," *Spartacist* [English edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999.)

A contemporary lesson in popular-front betrayal is found in South Africa. The South African Communist Party (SACP) has long backed the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC) and participates in the capitalist ANC-led Tripartite Alliance—a nationalist popular front that came to power in 1994, signaling the end of apartheid rule. The SACP's role in South Africa in containing proletarian struggle parallels that of the CPI(M)—both are central to the administration of the capitalist government.

Through its participation in the Tripartite Alliance, the SACP has been instrumental in suppressing the struggles of the black toilers and other oppressed, while providing ministers and provincial premiers to staff the ANC-led government and its repressive state apparatus. Our comrades in Spartacist South Africa are unique in calling to break with the Tripartite Alliance and to build a Bolshevik workers party that fights for a black-centered workers government. In contrast, the activity of the reformist left is firmly within the boundaries of the Alliance, reinforcing the political chains binding the masses to neo-apartheid capitalism.

Down With U.S.-India Pact Against China!

India is the imperialists' favourite "emerging giant" in Asia, one whose economic growth over the past decade or so is sometimes compared with that of China. In fact, China and India are fundamentally different kinds of states and societies.

India is a capitalist regional power dominated by imperialism. Its per capita gross domestic product is barely half that of China. China's poverty rate is less than half that of India's and the rate of child malnutrition three-quarters less. Female adult literacy in China is 87 percent; in India it is just 48 percent. India has more hungry people than any other country in the world. All the hype by the imperialists and the Indian rulers about India's supposed rapid-fire development is just that: hype. Even before the current global economic crisis, which is already sending India's economy into a tailspin, the country's per capita GDP was a minuscule six percent of that of the U.S.

China is a bureaucratically deformed workers state, and has been since the 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalist/landlord rule and ripped the world's most populous country from the clutches of the imperialist powers. For good reason, China became a beacon for millions of oppressed toilers in Asia. Despite the bureaucratic parasitism and mismanagement of the ruling Stalinist Chinese Communist Party, the collectivization of the economy has brought enormous social gains for workers, peasants and women, not least an end to centuries of chronic starvation in the countryside.

U.S. imperialism today sees capitalist India as a strategic ally in its drive to overturn the gains of the Chinese Revolution. This fall, Washington approved a pact for the sale of nuclear technology to India. As the *Financial Times* (28 September 2008) noted, this opens "a new chapter in relations" between the U.S. and India that "could help counter the rise of China." The International Communist League stands for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state against imperialist threats and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for a proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist, Stalinist ruling caste in Beijing and create a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

Noam Chomsky, Tariq Ali et al. Rescue CPI(M)

While the Nandigram massacre wracked the left in India, the CPI(M) found voices of solidarity outside the country. Less than two weeks after yet another assault on Nandigram led by a CPI(M) militia, a statement by Noam Chomsky, Tariq Ali, Susan George, Walden Bello, Howard

PTI photo

Kolkata, July 2006: Left Front Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya with representative of Indonesian Salim Group, infamous for its close ties with brutal Suharto regime.

Zinn and various other fake-left luminaries appeared in *The Hindu* (22 November 2007) and elsewhere. Silent on the Left Front's brutal state repression, the authors deplored "what appear to be unbridgeable gaps between people who share similar values" and expressed "trust that the people of Bengal will not allow their differences on some issues to tear apart the important experiments undertaken in the State (land reforms, local self-government)."

Many Indian leftists were stunned by this plea for unity between the state architects of a bloody massacre and its victims. As well, several intellectuals, including renowned writer Arundhati Roy and Bengali novelist Mahashweta Devi, issued an angry rebuttal. For our part, we were

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Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forums

The Bankruptcy of Capitalism
— Those Who Labour Must Rule! —

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(at St. George subway)
For more information: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

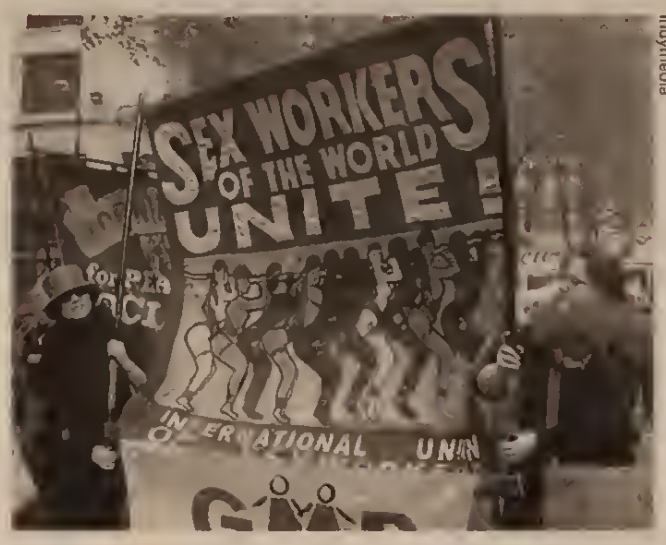
VANCOUVER
Saturday, February 7, 2 p.m.
Roundhouse Community Ctr.
181 Roundhouse Mews
(Corner of Davie St. and Pacific Blvd.)
For more information: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Down With Labour Government's Crackdown on Prostitution!

Britain

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 205 (Winter 2008-2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain.*

In the biggest shake-up of Britain's prostitution laws in 50 years, the Labour government is proposing draconian new legislation that would make it a criminal offence to pay for sex with someone who is "controlled for another person's gain." Anyone convicted would face a fine of up to £1000 and receive a criminal record. Not knowing whether a prostitute is "controlled" will be no excuse: according to Home Secretary Jacqui Smith, "This new criminal offence of paying for sex with someone who is trafficked or pimped will apply even if the buyer claims he did not know the woman was being controlled for gain" (*Independent*, 19 November 2008). If it is deemed that the client did know, he additionally may face charges of rape, which carry a potential life sentence. This attempt to crack down on prostitution is part of a broader drive by the Labour government to increase the repressive powers of the state and to regiment society. The new measures would give police additional powers to crack down on kerb-crawling [soliciting from a car] and to raid and close down brothels, arresting prostitutes, many of whom are immigrants.



Indymedia

Left: Sex workers organized in GMB union demonstrate for rights for prostitutes at London Mayday 2003 demonstration. Right: English Collective of Prostitutes poster.

Peter Fryer's book defined prudery as "interference in other people's pleasures." Modern-day Labourite Mrs. Grundys like Harriet Harman and Jacqui Smith have police, courts and prisons at their disposal.

The Spartacist League/Britain unambiguously opposes these measures, which if implemented would mark a significant shift towards outlawing prostitution altogether by penalising customers. The act of performing sex for money, or of paying for sex, is not a crime, either on the part of the prostitute or the client! Currently in Britain, neither prostitution nor paying for sex is illegal, but "soliciting," advertising in a phone booth, kerb-crawling and brothel-keeping are. We are for the decriminalisation of prostitution which we Marxists regard as a "crime without a victim," like drug use, gambling, pornography, homosexual sex and "statutory rape"—activities that are generally illegal or heavily regulated under capitalist law. The government is deliberately conflating horrific crimes against prostitutes such as debt bondage, sexual assault, beatings and other kinds of coercion with the fundamentally *consensuol* act between a prostitute and her client to exchange money for sex. For us the guiding principle for sexual relations is that of *effective consent*, meaning mutual agreement and understanding, as opposed to coercion. We believe that as long as those who take part agree to do so at the time, no one, least of all the state, has the right to tell them they can't do it.

Labour's proposed legislation is being cynically marketed under the guise of "protecting women from exploitation." According to the *Guardian*, Minister for Women Harriet Harman (who has previously called for outlawing prostitution altogether) has described the flow of women brought into Britain by human traffickers as "a modern slave trade" while claiming that "to protect women we must stop men buying sex from the victims of human trafficking" (19 November 2008). For starters, the notion of this Labour government "protecting women" is obscene, coming from the very government responsible for the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan which have resulted in untold brutality against women and children. At home Labour is proposing legislation which would slash benefits for single mothers even further as part of its attacks on the working class and poor.

What Harman describes as a "modern slave trade" is largely debt bondage, where a worker is forced to pay off a large debt to smugglers and gangmasters to be taken across the border and to be able to work. Most of these workers toil in the agricultural, food processing, cleaning, health care, catering and construction sectors. The British economy is highly reliant on this low-paid, "flexible" immigrant labour, both legal and illegal. The government's racist anti-immigration laws make it virtually impossible to get into Britain, and compel illegal workers to live and work in the most horrific conditions. Such conditions resulted in the deaths of 23 Chinese workers picking cockles in Morecambe Bay in February 2004.

Debt bondage, rape, sexual assault and beatings are real crimes. However, we oppose this attempt by the state to amalgamate "trafficking" and "sex slavery" with prostitution and to label all exchanges of money for sex as potential slavery. Prostitution more often than not is degrading and exploitative, but criminalisation simply forces the prostitute into a lumpen milieu where access to social services is difficult and where she or he is more vulnerable to organised crime and violence by pimps. As Marxists we warn that any intervention by the capitalist state will necessarily intensify the misery for all involved and serve as a pretext for unleashing the cops and courts in a multiple attack on immigrants, women and sex. In fact, immigrant women "rescued" by police during "anti-trafficking" raids are routinely deported. The Spartacist League calls for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations!* As we wrote in "Anti-Immigrant, Anti-Woman, Anti-Sex: U.S./UN Crusade Against 'Sex Trafficking'":

> "The 'sex slavery' crusade is a cynical and dangerous business because it both legitimizes government persecution of immigrants and invokes state authority to intervene as moral arbiter in our most intimate affairs. It bolsters the anti-sex witchhunt as a whole and deflects attention from the real violence perpetrated every day against women and children under this class system."
>
> —*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 58, Spring 2004

Niki Adams, speaking for the English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP), has aptly described the government's claim that most prostitutes are trafficked as "completely fabricated" (*Guardian*, 19 November 2008) while the ECP issued a statement opposing the new legislation saying this would lead to "more Anti-Social Behaviour Orders landing more of us in prison; more deportations under the guise of cracking down on trafficking; higher prison sentences for women working from premises" (www.allwomencount.net). In keeping with the contempt for the "lower" classes that oozes from the top ranks of New Labour, the new legislation targets the poorer, more vulnerable and often immigrant prostitutes likely to be working on the street or in brothels, not the escort services provided by highly paid "call girls."

Harriet Harman has even enlisted the Women's Institute (WI)—that embodiment of middle-class "Middle England"—to scour the local papers for "suspicious" ads. The traditional role of the WI is summed up in the phrase "jam and Jerusalem," meaning a woman's place is in the kitchen and referencing the patriotic hymn "Jerusalem," extolling England's "green and pleasant land." Presumably Harriet Harman and Jacqui Smith would prefer the WI stick to its traditional activities rather than its more recent claim to fame, posing naked for pictures in charity calendars as depicted in the movie *Calendar Girls*.

Labour's crackdown on prostitution is part of a moral crusade targeting sexual activity that strays outside of conservative and religious "family values," such as "underage" sex, homosexuality and other "sins" including "binge drinking." Labour's "feminist" anti-sex warriors such as Harriet Harman stand in the long tradition of morality police brilliantly chronicled in Peter Fryer's 1963 book *Mrs. Grundy: Studies in English Prudery*. An example was the 18th-century "Societies for the Reformation of Manners" which were "responsible for prosecuting no fewer than 101,683 persons in the London area alone, mostly for sabbath-breaking, swearing, drunkenness, lewdness, brothel-keeping, and sodomy."

The status of prostitutes in society is related to the status of women more generally, itself a measure of a society's advancement. Thus the conditions faced by the prostitute vary greatly with time, place and class. The family is the central

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23rd Annual Partisan Defense Committee Holiday Appeal

Thousands Raised for Class-War Prisoners

Last December marked the 23rd annual Holiday Appeal, which raises funds for the Partisan Defense Committee's program of sending monthly stipends and holiday gifts to class-war prisoners and their families. Held in New York, Chicago, the Bay Area, Los Angeles and Toronto, these benefits raised over $10,000 after expenses as a concrete expression of solidarity with class-war prisoners.

The 2008 Holiday Appeal benefits focused particularly on the struggle to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man falsely convicted of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 December 1981. Also honored were 15 other men and women who were singled out by the state for standing up to racist capitalist oppression and exploitation. With this act of solidarity the PDC has revived and kept alive the tradition of class-struggle defense of those imprisoned for championing the rights of labor and all the oppressed. This tradition was begun by the International Labor Defense (ILD) under James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Communist Party, the ILD's first secretary (1925-28) and later the founder of American Trotskyism. As a resolution from the ILD's first conference in 1925 declared: "The workers must not be allowed to forget those who lie in prison for them, but must be stirred into action in their defense."

In building for these benefits, the PDC —a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—addressed trade-union locals in several cities, emphasizing that the working class must break with the capitalist Democratic Party in order to advance its own interests and those of the oppressed. This elicited much discussion and debate, especially in the wake of the election of Barack Obama. In the Bay Area, presentations were made at both the ILWU longshore Local 10 and AFSCME Local 444 unions' November meetings. Amalgamated Transit Union locals 308 and 241 in Chicago and the New York chapter of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists contributed money for the class-war prisoners and Mumia Abu-Jamal's defense.

At the Chicago Holiday Appeal, one of the sit-in participants from United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 1110, spoke about the six-day plant occupation by largely immigrant and black workers at the Republic Windows & Doors factory in Chicago, which captured the attention of the nation (see "UE Workers Win Severance Pay," *WV* No. 927, 2 January).

The New York City benefit, which drew more than 150 people, including many youth and trade unionists, featured the one-man play, *John Brown: Trumpet of Freedom*, by George Wolf Reily and Norman Thomas Marshall (who performed the play). The play honored those who fought against slavery in the Civil War, and underlined the significance of John Brown's 1859 raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Free the Class-War Prisoners!
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!

WV Photos

New York City Holiday Appeal benefit (top). Far left: Ricardo Caceres, Republic Windows sit-in participant and member of UE Local 1110, addresses Chicago benefit. Left: Monique Code speaking in New York City on behalf of class-war prisoner Jamal Hart.

All the Holiday Appeals played taped greetings from Mumia Abu-Jamal made especially for the occasion (see below). Wadiya Jamal, Mumia Abu-Jamal's wife, wrote before the meeting: "There is no word to express the extent of gratitude for the continued support of the PDC to Mumia's fight for freedom." Excerpts from greetings by other class-war prisoners, most of whom have been incarcerated for at least a quarter century, were also read.

A letter on behalf of the eight surviving members of the MOVE 9 thanked the PDC for its work "for not only this year, but all of the years in the past, as we approach yet another new administration of capitalism." The MOVE 9 were framed up on conspiracy and murder charges after a vicious police assault on MOVE's home in Philadelphia's Powelton Village neighborhood in August 1978. For the first time since their imprisonment over 30 years ago, the MOVE 9 became eligible for parole last April. Their parole was rejected. In his greetings to the Holiday Appeals, MOVE 9 prisoner Delbert Africa wrote: "Best believe, the *world-wide* letters, e-mails, telephone calls, rallies—all the activities scared and shook-up the parole board to the point that they even admitted it was unprecedented! Of course, it did not stop the arrogant bastards from giving us all one year 'hits'."

Ed Poindexter, a former Black Panther supporter and a leader of the National Committee to Combat Fascism, also sent greetings. He and his comrade Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa were framed up as part of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed. In his greetings Ed Poindexter wrote:

> "I used to think no matter how long I would serve in prison, and no matter what the oppressive conditions, that they'd never break me. But now as I sit here in my wheelchair at 64 years old and cripple, my mind and spirit still maintain my initial position, yet my body is disagreeing. But, rest assured, as long as there is at least a single breath left in this tired body, I will continue to resist, fight for my personal liberty and plan for an eventual future 'touchdown' back to the community to resume my life-long passion of serving the people."

Jaan Laaman and Tom Manning are the two remaining members of the Ohio 7 still in prison. This radical group took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings against symbols of U.S. imperialism in the late 1970s and 1980s. In his greetings Jaan Laaman expressed his gratitude for those "supporting U.S. political prisoners," and explained that as he was writing these words on 15 November 2008, he had just fully completed his Massachusetts state sentence after being in captivity for over 24 years. But, he added, "Today, I also started my next federal sentence of 53 years. In two days I will be turned over to U.S. Marshals and transported to some federal prison to begin this new sentence." This is an outrage—free Laaman and Manning now!

Messages were also received from Leonard Peltier and Hugo Pinell (see page 2 for updates on their cases). Peltier has been incarcerated for more than three decades because of his activism in the American Indian Movement. He has come to symbolize this country's racist repression of its native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Pinell, a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights, is the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison. Despite hundreds of letters of support, Pinell has repeatedly been denied parole. Now in his 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence, and, as he wrote, is being

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Mumia's Greetings to Holiday Appeal Benefits

We print below the taped greetings from Mumia Abu-Jamal to the 2008 PDC Holiday Appeal gatherings.

Ona Move!

I want to thank you all for your work in support of political and class-war prisoners, whose names are almost too numerous for me to recount here.

Suffice it to say, they represent people from wide and various movements, radical, socialist, social and labor.

But as vicious and as unjust as the state has been (and continues to be) in its enmity against those of us in various movements, as these words are written we are all witnessing a relentless war against *all* workers in the midst of the current economic crisis.

Those of us who've studied these matters know that this crisis is one that is endemic to the capitalist system itself. How could it do otherwise than create crisis?

Marx and Engels said that "the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."

Thus we see, not just repression against our movements, violations of their own "law," and the like, but we see workers thrown out of work by the millions, while banks are granted billions!

We see social injustice next to obscene capitalist rapaciousness.

This day, this time of trial and tribulation, should be seen as one of incredible opportunity, and we should build our movements stronger as this social order weakens.

Babylon is falling!

Thank you! Ona Move! Long Live John Africa!

From death row, this is Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Bay Area LBL Holiday Appeal Speaker:

"Obama's Promise of 'Change' Is a Cruel Hoax"

We print below the speech given by Labor Black League representative Adwoa Oni at the Bay Area Holiday Appeal on 7 December 2008.

The Labor Black League for Social Defense stands for mobilizing the masses of black and working people for militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America. Initiated by and fraternally allied to the Marxist Spartacist League, the LBL is part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and oppressed against the bosses and for socialism.

The election of Barack Obama serves as a powerful propaganda weapon for the U.S. bourgeoisie at home and abroad. But Obama's promise of "change" is a cruel hoax. As the next Commander-in-Chief of bloody U.S. imperialism, he will preside over the racist capitalist system, which is based on the brutal exploitation of working people. Racist oppression, grinding poverty, police violence and massive incarceration are all endemic to the American capitalist system, and that will continue to be the reality for black and working people. It will be Obama's job to contain potential social unrest and impose austerity measures upon working people on behalf of the racist ruling class. In this, Obama is following the same script as black Democrats who have been employed as mayors and police chiefs of major urban areas—from Oakland to L.A., to Detroit, to Philadelphia and elsewhere. Their job has been to keep working and black people down and to oversee rampant cop terror. We have not forgotten the 1985 Mother's Day bombing of the MOVE commune, carried out under Philadelphia's black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode, that burned alive eleven people, including five children, and was allowed to burn down a whole black neighborhood. That is the role of the black Democrats and Barack Obama!

Class-war political prisoner Mumia

WV Photo

Labor Black League representative Adwoa Oni at Bay Area Holiday Appeal.

Abu-Jamal's case is at a critical stage following the rejection of his appeals by the bourgeois courts. Yet at a Mumia event sponsored by Socialist Action, Jeff Mackler (Socialist Action's leader) silenced any mention of class struggle and socialism in order to embrace the little bourgeois politico Cynthia McKinney. However, an LBL spokesman intervened from the floor and forthrightly put forward our class-struggle perspective. She said: "And one fundamental truth is that black oppression is the cornerstone of American capitalism, and...I don't see anybody addressing that because the system that put Mumia in jail and condemned him to die is the capitalist system itself." That intervention exemplifies what the LBL fights for—our fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal is rooted in the struggle to make the multiracial working class conscious of its class interests in the fight against the entire depraved capitalist system, particularly the understanding that in America the fight for black freedom is central to the struggle for the emancipation of labor itself. Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free the MOVE 9! Black liberation through socialist revolution!

As overseer of the whole bloody plantation, Obama vows to escalate the "war on terror" in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and at home. Meanwhile the retrial of the San Francisco 8, former Black Panthers, brings Gitmo to the West Bay. The original charges were thrown out because the so-called "evidence" and "confessions" were extracted through torture. Torture and rendition have always been part of the capitalists' arsenal of repression. We say: Drop the charges! Hands off the SF 8!

Drop the bogus charges against longshoremen Jason Ruffin and Aaron Harrison! [These two black ILWU longshore union members were beaten and arrested in August 2007 for the "crime" of trying to return after lunch to work at the Sacramento port and appealing to their union for help in doing so. See "'War on Terror' Assault on Black Longshoremen," *WV* No. 926 (5 December 2008).] The government's "war on terror" has long had the ILWU in its sights, yet outrageously the leadership of the ILWU has wrongly supported the maritime security measures under which the two ILWU longshoremen are being prosecuted by the government. The prosecution of Ruffin and Harrison is the bitter fruit of this treacherous policy by the union tops. Outrageously, security guards on the docks, whose job is to police the workforce and enforce the government's anti-union laws, are members of the ILWU. We say: Security guards out of the unions! Cops out of the unions! Organize the largely immigrant port truckers! At a rally in October in front of the Yolo County courthouse supporting Ruffin and Harrison, an LBL spokesman declared: "The LBL...calls on the union movement to organize the unorganized, like the port truckers, and fight for citizenship rights for all immigrants. Down with the I.C.E. raids!"

Down with Proposition 8! The LBL opposed the reactionary Proposition 8 banning same-sex marriage. Black working people have been in the forefront of social and class struggle in this country, but the black church has also promoted social backwardness and bigotry when it comes to issues of abortion and homosexual rights. While Obama said Prop 8 was "unnecessary," his declaration that marriage is a "sacred union" between a man and a woman was exploited in black neighborhoods by the Prop 8 bigots. More than 60 percent of black voters backed Prop 8. We combat every manifestation of homophobic bigotry just as we fight anti-immigrant prejudice among blacks or anti-black racism among immigrants and gays. In America, family law has always been saturated with racism: black slaves were denied legal marriage. One hundred years after the Civil War, some states still barred black-white marriage. Church and state out of our bedrooms! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Full citizenship rights for immigrants! Finish the Civil War! Forward to a workers state!■

Young Spartacus

Fake Socialists Celebrate New Commander-in-Chief

SYC Speaker at Chicago Holiday Appeal

We print below an edited excerpt from the presentation of Spartacus Youth Club spokesman Tom Allegri at the 14 December 2008 Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners in Chicago.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the youth of our generation have been told the lie that communism is dead, that the "end of history" has come with "democratic" capitalism. Our perspective is based on the model of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. It destroyed the class rule of the bourgeoisie and laid the basis for a classless society based on material abundance. Even after its degeneration under the Stalinist bureaucracy beginning in 1923-24, the Soviet workers state offered the promise of jobs, medical care, schools and mass transit under a centralized, planned economy. That's why we defended the Soviet degenerated workers state until the very end, just as we defend the remaining deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba.

The bourgeoisie's lie of the "death of communism" has a reflection in the myth of the "end of racism"—a myth that Obama's campaign propped up—and in the burial of the struggle for racial integration as a "failed experiment." It's no surprise, then, that the same fake-socialist reformists in the International Socialist Organization (ISO) who criminally cheered the fall of the Soviet Union also echoed the bourgeois liberals' pro-Obama chants of "Yes We Can!" with touching faith in a "post-racial" capitalist democracy. The ISO and other reformists bury the simple fact that the Democrats are the other party of racist U.S. imperialism and class enemies of the proletariat. The ISO even celebrated with a party in Harlem and called the victory a "transformative event." The Revolutionary Communist Party's World Can't Wait flocked to Grant Park with throngs of Obama's supporters on election night. And the Workers World Party's Larry Holmes gushed about the "feeling of liberation" unleashed by Obama's win. In stark contrast to the reformists' bald-faced, class-collaborationist praise of U.S. imperialism's chief executive, the SYC fought vigorously to break youth from any illusions in bourgeois candidates and capitalist electoral politics, and win them to the fight for a multiracial working-class party, which is the necessary instrumentality to get rid of this rotting capitalist system.

The fake socialists' social-pacifist calls to "bring the troops home!" and for "jobs not war" build the dangerous illusion that capitalism can be reformed into a peaceful, democratic system that promotes the interests of the world's proletariat and oppressed. But all the "peace-loving" sloganeering of our fake-socialist opponents belies one simple fact: that they have historically sided with the U.S. imperialists against the world's working

Young Spartacus

Spartacus Youth Club spokesman Tom Allegri.

class. They did just that in their egregious opposition to the Red Army's intervention into Afghanistan in the late '70s and '80s. That intervention raised point-blank the question of women's liberation through extending the historic gains of the October Revolution.

Today, the reformists are so enamored of the "Obama phenomenon" that they have little to say about the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan—Obama, who sees this war as the "good war" and a "just response" to 9/11, has pledged more troops to continue the bloodletting there. This poses an increased danger to the world's oppressed. We say: *All U.S. troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now!*

As Rosa Luxemburg said, the question posed today is socialism or barbarism. With the Soviet Union gone, those workers and radical youth who identify their struggles with socialism are very exceptional and rare. The Spartacus Youth Club provides a training ground for the next generation of professional revolutionaries who want to dedicate their lives to the fight for a socialist future. Though small, we are armed with a powerful program and a deep memory of the working class's struggles and victories. Our fundamental task remains to win those exceptional individuals to Marxism and arm them with its program, the only one that can lead the workers and oppressed to victory when they rise to struggle, as they inevitably will. Join us!

Free the class-war prisoners! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA
Wednesday, February 4, 6:30 p.m.
Marxism and the Scientific Worldview
San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room T-153, Terrace Level
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
or sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES
Wednesday, February 4, 6 p.m.
Zionist Bloodbath in Gaza
U.S. Imperialists Cheer on Israeli Terror
Defend the Palestinian People!
For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!
UCLA, Bunche Hall, Room 2173
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
or slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO
Wednesday, February 11, 6:30 p.m.
Marxism and the National Question:
Independence for Quebec!
University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Building, Room 2114
100 St. George Street
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
or spartcan@on.aibn.com

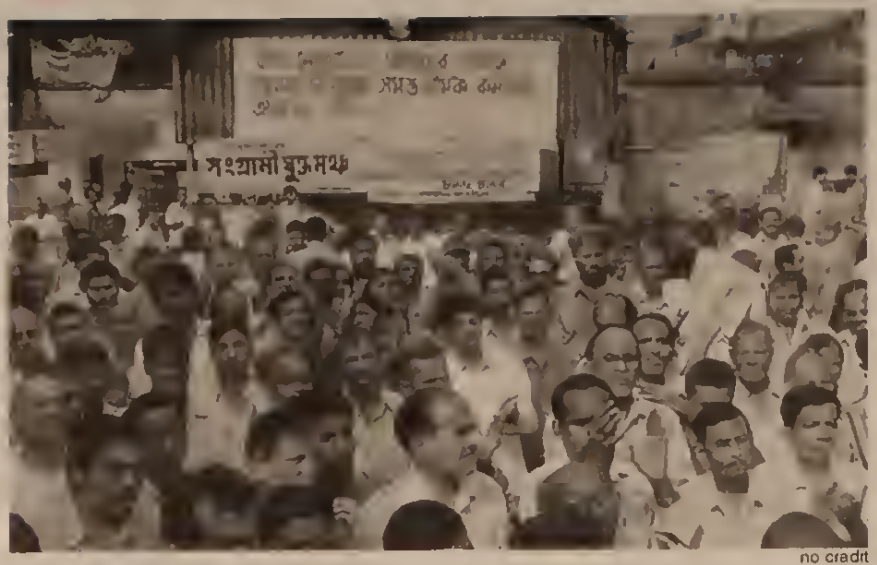
Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

India...

(continued from page 4)

unsurprised. This is par for the course for petty-bourgeois dilettantes like Chomsky et al., many of whom have been leading publicists for the popular-frontist World Social Forums. International confabs backed by numerous capitalist governments and corporate endowments, the purpose of the Social Forums has been to ensure that those who oppose some of the depredations of capitalism do not challenge the capitalist system itself. As noted in a well-researched article in *Aspects of India's Economy* (September 2003) shortly before the 2004 Social Forum in Mumbai, these gatherings are funded by the likes of the "Ford Foundation, which has closely collaborated with the US Central Intelligence Agency internationally, and in India has helped to shape the government's policies in favour of American interests."

An article in the online version of the British Socialist Workers Party's (SWP) *International Socialism* (2 July 2007) attacked the Nandigram massacre—only to mourn the lost "unity" of the Social Forums, including in India, where the left shared a "common platform." "After Nandigram," they continue, "it is difficult to see where this shared space is." According to *International Socialism*, the alternative to the CPI(M) is "a real democratic left, stripped of old dogmas" that breaks "from the dead past and stifling present." Here the SWP is dishing out the same old anti-communist garbage in new pails.



no credit

March 2007 strike at Hindmotors, Kolkata. Only proletarian revolution will liberate Indian masses.

In sharp contrast, the ICL fights for the communism of Lenin and Trotsky whose highest embodiment was the 1917 Russian workers revolution. In India today, alongside the massive peasantry is a small but very powerful and vibrant working class. It is this proletariat that holds the key to the future. In January 2007, and again in March, West Bengal workers carried out statewide strikes against the bloodshed at Nandigram. More recently, in August this year, a countrywide general strike against price rises, rising unemployment and falling real wages aimed at the UPA government brought West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura almost to a standstill. The burning need is to give this immense proletarian social power the necessary leadership and program through the forging of a genuinely revolutionary party, a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party.

Against the class collaborationism and popular-frontism endemic to the Indian left, such a party will counterpose a revolutionary program for the all-sided emancipation of the Indian masses under working-class rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat. Our Trotskyist forebears in the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India stood firmly in this tradition. In 1942 they declared:

> "The ultimate fate of the revolution in India, as in Russia, will be determined in the arena of the international revolution. Nor will India by its own forces be able to accomplish the task of making the transition to socialism. Not only the backwardness of the country, but also the international division of labor and the interdependence—produced by capitalism itself—of the different parts of world economy, demand that this task of the establishment of socialism can be accomplished only on a world scale. The victorious revolution in India, however, dealing a mortal blow to the oldest and most widespread imperialism in the world will on the one hand produce the most profound crisis in the entire capitalist world and shake world capitalism to its foundations. On the other hand it will inspire and galvanize into action millions of proletarians and colonial slaves the world over and inaugurate a new era of world revolution."
>
> —"The Classes of India and Their Political Roles: A Thesis of the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India," *Fourth International*, March 1942■

Holiday Appeal...

(continued from page 6)

"kept in maximum custody status, totally deprived and not allowed contact visits."

In New York, the evening concluded with live greetings from federal prison by Jamal Hart, Mumia Abu-Jamal's son. Hart was framed up for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father and was sentenced in 1998 to 15 1/2 years without parole on bogus firearms possession charges. In greetings written for the occasion, which were read by Monique Code, he stated:

> "As a man who didn't think twice to become the voice of the voiceless, Mumia stepped up to the plate to expose this demonic system. A system that was and still continues to enforce intense oppression on African Americans throughout this nation by murderous police officers.... "The only way Mumia will be free is for all of us to mobilize like never before and demand that freedom he and all of our freedom fighters so rightfully deserve. We must let them know that we will never give up!"

The cases of the 16 class-war prisoners honored at this year's benefits exemplify key aspects of our Marxist program. Since initiating the stipends program, we have provided support to 33 prisoners on three continents. These included fighters against black oppression in the U.S. and labor militants slapped with prison sentences for defending strikes and defending their union from scabs and thugs. Overseas, we sent a stipend to Mordechai Vanunu, the courageous Israeli nuclear technician who in 1986 was kidnapped in Italy by Mossad agents and railroaded to prison for 18 years for exposing the extent of Israel's nuclear arsenal. After the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy treacherously withdrew the Red Army from Afghanistan in 1988-89, the PDC also organized a campaign that raised over $44,000 worldwide in support of the heroic people of Jalalabad who were fighting against the U.S.-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats.

We urge *WV* readers to support the work of the Partisan Defense Committee. Become a sustaining contributor to help drive the work of the PDC forward! Contributions can be sent to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. For more information about the class-war prisoners see: www.partisandefense.org/stipend.html.■

Prostitution...

(continued from page 5)

instrument for the subjugation of women under capitalism. Its historical function is to transmit private property to "legitimate" heirs through inheritance, although that function has little relevance to working-class people who generally have little to pass on. It serves to instil obedience to bourgeois codes of morality and to impose on the working class the burden of raising the next generation of wage slaves. As we wrote in "U.S./UN Crusade Against 'Sex Trafficking'":

> "*It is the institution of the family that brings money into sexual relations.* Whether it's renting a prostitute by the hour or a wife by the lifetime, the family and the oppression of women are founded on private property, and the religious codes of morality and capitalist law are all that distinguish the wife from the prostitute in this fundamental sense....
>
> "Under socialism, the family will be replaced by communal childcare and housework, enabling women to participate fully in economic, social and political life.... Birth control and abortions will be free and on demand, with free, quality health care for all. Sex will be free from the snooping of preachy busybodies and corrupt cops. The liberation of the prostitute can't be separated from the liberation of women as a whole, and prostitution will die only as the institution of the family is replaced."

The Spartacist League seeks to build a revolutionary party of the working class to uproot this decaying capitalist system and replace it with planned collectivised economies on an international scale, laying the material basis for the liberation of humanity. *For women's liberation through socialist revolution!*■

Spartacist Black History Month Forums

Mexican-American War— Prelude to American Civil War

Seizing the reins as Commander-in-Chief of racist U.S. imperialism, Barack Obama paid homage to the founders of this country, which was built on the bodies of black slaves and extended through bloody conquest. This included the invasion of Mexico in 1846, in which half of Mexico was annexed in the interests of the Southern slavocracy. Today, Obama's "national unity" appeals are designed to refurbish the "democratic" credentials of American imperialism in order to jack up the brutal exploitation of the working class, blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed in this country and to pursue repression and conquest abroad. Exposing the true history on which racist American imperialism was founded is part of our commitment to the cause of black freedom and the emancipation of the working class through victorious socialist revolution in the bastion of world imperialism.

- **Finish the Civil War— For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**
- **Bloody U.S. Imperialism— Enemy of World's Working People and Oppressed**
- **For Socialist Revolution from the Yukon to the Yucatán and Throughout the Americas!**
- **Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!**

Bay Area
Sunday, February 15
3 p.m.
Centro del Pueblo, 2nd floor
474 Valencia Street
San Francisco
(1 block from 16th St. BART Sta.)
For more information:
(510) 839-0851
sfbayarea@sbcglobal.net

Los Angeles
Saturday, February 14
4 p.m.
Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 3300 Wilshire Blvd.
(2 blocks west of Vermont/ Wilshire Red Line Station)
For more information:
(213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

New York City
Saturday, February 28
6 p.m.
6 Harrison Street
(#1 train to Franklin St., west on Franklin to Hudson, 1 block south to Harrison)
For more information:
(212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

Chicago

Finish the Civil War! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

The Second American Revolution Smashed Chattel Slavery
The Fight for Black Freedom Continues

Thursday, February 12, 7 p.m.
University of Chicago, Stuart Hall, Room 104

For more information: (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

Web site: www.icl-li.org • **E-mail address:** vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

Chicago ..... Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680, (312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 222 S. Morgan (Buzzer 23)

Los Angeles ..... Box 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029, (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 2-5 p.m., 3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215

New York ..... Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008, (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: 1st and 3rd Sat. of every month, 1-4 p.m., and by appointment, 299 Broadway, Suite 318

Oakland ..... Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604, (510) 839-0851
sfbayarea@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: Sat. 1-5 p.m., 1634 Telegraph, 3rd Floor

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA/LIGUE TROTSKYSTE DU CANADA

Toronto ..... Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

Vancouver ..... Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Obama...

(continued from page 1)

capitalist state exists to defend the rule and profits of the capitalist class. All historical experience has shown that it cannot be reformed, but must be smashed through a socialist revolution that establishes in its place a workers state to defend the rule of the working class and its allies. Thus, as Marxists, we are opposed to giving any political support to any capitalist politician—Democrat, Republican or Green—on principle. Nor would we ourselves run for an executive office (i.e., president, governor or mayor). To stand for election to executive positions carries the implication that one is ready to accept responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state.

WWP even apologizes for Obama's choice of Rick Warren, an anti-gay bigot and opponent of women's rights, to deliver the invocation at the inauguration. While "disappointment" at Warren's role is, according to *Workers World* (11 January), "understandable," "When it comes to inaugural preachers, Warren is by no means the worst of the lot." Translation: Shut up—because, as WWP put it in the same article, Obama's victory "represented a breakthrough in the struggle against racism"!

WWP may revel in "love" for Obama, but that love will not be reciprocated: A January 16 *Washington Post* online article was entitled, "Obama Pledges Entitlement Reform." Pointing to programs like Social Security and Medicare, Obama told the *Post*, "there are going to be very difficult choices and issues of sacrifice." Echoing George W. Bush—who stated after the 2004 elections, "I earned capital in the campaign, political capital, and I intend to spend it"—Obama said, "You have to have a president who is willing to spend some political capital on this. And I intend to spend some." In this, Obama follows in the footsteps of the black Democrats who have been employed as mayors and police chiefs of major urban areas, epitomized by the statement of former New York City mayor David Dinkins to a meeting of Wall Street financiers: "They'll take it from me."

The road to black freedom lies in the struggle to shatter this racist capitalist system through proletarian socialist revolution, and the power to do that lies with the multiracial working class. We base our struggle for black liberation on the program of revolutionary integrationism. While combating every manifestation of racist oppression, fighting in particular to mobilize the social power of the multiracial labor movement, we underline that full equality for the black masses requires that the working class rip the economy out of the hands of the racist capitalist rulers and reorganize it on a socialist basis. Only then will it be possible to eliminate the material roots of black oppression through the full integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society based on a collectivized economy with quality jobs, housing, health care and education for all. *For black liberation through socialist revolution! For a workers party to fight for a workers government!*

Reformist Obamamania

Even as Israel pounded the Gaza Strip, the ISO politely described Obama's oftenstated support to the murderous Zionist state as being "silent during Israel's slaughter" (*Sociolist Worker*, 21 January). But well before taking office, Obama made clear his support for the Israeli bloodbath. In a visit to Israel during his campaign, he clearly stated, "If somebody was sending rockets into my house where my two daughters sleep at night, I'm going to do everything in my power to stop that. And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing." For its part, Israel, after slaughtering over 1,300 Palestinians, withdrew from Gaza hours before the inaugural ceremonies.

In the same January 21 article, the ISO enthused over the "profound impact" of the Obama campaign, writing:

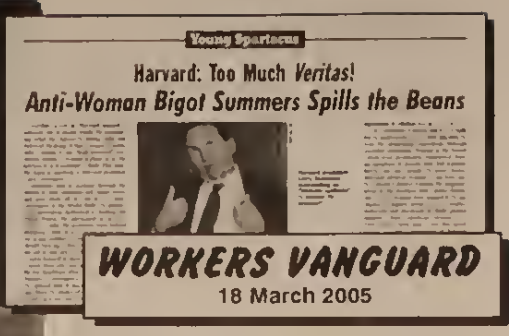
> "After a generation of the conservative agenda dominating in Washington, when the White House and Congress seemed wholly insulated from any influence by ordinary people, Obama's victory convinced large numbers of people of some basic sentiments at the heart of the great struggles of the past—that something different is possible, and that what we do matters."

The ISO concludes: "But the most fundamental changes in society *do* happen from the bottom up. And it's up to the people who want to see that change to use all the opportunities presented to us in this new era of Barack Obama—to argue, to mobilize and to agitate." Both the ISO and Socialist Alternative sponsored a January 20 "Seattle Inauguration Day Celebration," which proclaimed "We Voted Barack, Now Get Out of Kahul and Iraq!" The Web site for the event burbled about how "amazing" it was that Obama was "elected by a vocal, antiwar, young constituency" and claimed that celebrating the end of the "old era" could best be done by "letting President Obama know what the real changes that we want and deserve are" (j20celebration.blogspot.com).

Put simply: the reformists want to "mobilize" to make Obama fight. And Obama will fight—for the class that has hired him as chief executive, in the interests of U.S. imperialism.

"We remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who, at this very hour, patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains," Obama intoned in his inaugural speech, referring to the U.S. occupiers of Iraq and Afghanistan, where hundreds of thousands have been slaughtered at the hands of U.S. imperialism. As he completed his first week in office, CIA Predator missile-bearing drones continued to slam into Pakistan, one killing at least 15 people in western Pakistan on January 23. A senior Pakistani official says that as many as 100 civilians have been killed by the missiles. More are sure to come as Obama's war on Afghanistan heats up, with 30,000 more troops slated for dispatch there. This is in line with Democratic Party policy of reducing troops in Iraq to beef up occupation forces in Afghanistan.

Reuters



Obama's National Economic Council head Larry Summers was dumped as Harvard president after "speculating" that lack of women in sciences was a question of "intrinsic aptitude." *Young Spartacus* article in *WV* (above) noted he also advocated dumping toxic waste in Third World in 1991.

Obama is moving to clean up some of the most internationally damaging "excesses" of the Bush era. This includes his executive order to close the Guantánamo concentration camp by the end of the year—though the fate of the inmates is unclear. But such acts serve to make U.S. imperialism more effective in pursuing its bloody ends by giving it a "humane" facade. Obama is a staunch supporter of the "war on terror"—which has served as the pretext for imperialist depredation abroad and the evisceration of democratic rights at home—including voting as a Senator for warrantless wiretapping and the renewal of the USA Patriot Act. His inner circle of advisers includes Carter- and Clinton-era war criminals like Zbigniew Brzezinski and Madeleine Albright as well as staunch supporters of Zionist Israel like Vice President Joe Biden and Rahm Emanuel, his chief of staff.

For its part, the reformist Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) has spent the Bush years chanting "The World Can't Wait! Drive Out the Bush Regime!" So, now what? After a brisk shoe-throwing rally against Bush in Washington and "die-in" against the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan on 19 January, the RCP topped off its festivities the next day during the inaugural parade with an "ARREST BUSH event in front of the FBI building" (showing a touching faith in the bourgeois state and its secret police, to say the least). *Revolution* online (19 January) calls on the Obama regime to "Indict the War Criminals!"—in the Bush regime. The RCP earnestly pleads:

> "All this is not to say that it is impossible that Bush, Cheney and the rest of the criminal cabal would be put on trial by the new crew in the White House. BUT this is not going to happen without an outpouring of outrage and tremendous struggle by millions of people. It is not going to happen without an impossible-to-ignore demand that manifests politically in the streets and in all kinds of ways among various strata of society—on a level where the rulers feel that this outpouring more threatens the legitimacy of their whole system than going through the prosecution of Bush and Cheney would."

UPPA

Bombed-out ruins of Gaza. Zionist rulers slaughtered over 1,300 Palestinians; Obama has pledged to back Israeli terror.

What cynicism! CIA dirty tricks, torture, vile measures taken as part of "counter-insurgency" from the Philippines to Vietnam and Iraq are part and parcel of the imperialist arsenal under the rule of both capitalist parties.

In counterposition to such repulsive reformist fawning, we say, from Afghanistan to Iraq and Guantánamo: *Free all the detainees! U.S. out of Guantánamo!* As revolutionary opponents of U.S. imperialism, we stood for the military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq in the lead-up to U.S. imperialism's invasions, while politically opposing the reactionary Taliban and Saddam Hussein's brutal capitalist regime. We call for class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home. We are for the *defeat* of U.S. forces; their every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed around the globe. We demand the *immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops and bases from Iraq, Afghanistan and Central Asia! U.S. hands off Pakistan and Iran!*

Barack Obama: Anti-Communist

Obama's inaugural speech took pains to hail those who "faced down fascism and communism not just with missiles and tanks," an allusion to the Cold War combination of intense military, economic and ideological pressure brought to bear in the destruction of the former Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states. The restoration of capitalism in these countries was a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat, including by removing what was the main counterweight to the bloody ambitions of U.S. imperialism.

By equating communism with fascism, Obama is echoing an old war cry of bourgeois apologists who not only smear communism but also trivialize the unique and unspeakable crimes of Hitler's Holocaust, in which millions were murdered in a crusade to eliminate whole peoples from the face of the earth. In fact, the relationship between the program of communism and that of fascism is that they are polar opposites. Authentic communism means the full liberation of all of humanity from material scarcity. Fascism is the epitome of bourgeois-nationalist reaction and capitalist barbarism; it is a form of capitalist rule that the bourgeoisie resorts to in extremis, dispensing with bourgeois democracy to maintain its class power, as the German bourgeoisie did in handing power to Hitler on the road to World War II. As we wrote in "*Black Book*: Anti-Communist Big Lie" (*WV* No. 692, 5 June 1998): "Hitlerite fascism was the most diehard, most ideological expression of the bourgeoisie's unremitting world struggle against Communism."

During his Senate confirmation hearing, Obama's Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner noted that "President Obama... believes that China is manipulating its currency," a charge that could result in U.S. economic sanctions against the Chinese deformed workers state. As a *New York Times* (24 January) headline put it: "China Jittery About Obama Amid Signs of Harder Line."

The U.S. imperialists seek to restore capitalist rule in the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, and for this they have a two-pronged strategy: military encirclement combined with capitalist economic penetration. Obama represents the section of the bourgeoisie that wants to extricate its troops from the Iraq quagmire in order to aim the U.S. military at more

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Reformist International Socialist Organization hails new imperialist chief, sponsored "Seattle Inaugural Celebration" (above), as *Socialist Worker* peddles Obama "change" rhetoric.

Obama...

(continued from page 9)

strategic and long-term targets, not least China. At the same time, the Democrats, backed by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, have been in the forefront of pushing anti-China chauvinist protectionism.

The openly anti-Communist ISO would agree with Obama that those states where capitalist rule has been overturned *should*, in the name of "democracy," be smashed. This is in line with their support to every imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary movement against the former Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe. Such is their lineage, ever since their political forebears departed from the Trotskyist movement when they refused to defend the USSR during the 1950-53 Korean War. Nor is the RCP much different from the garden-variety anti-Communist social democrats of the ISO: the RCP long ago wrote off China when its preferred faction lost power following Mao's death in 1976, and earlier it had denounced the Soviet degenerated workers state, the military-industrial powerhouse of the non-capitalist world, as "Soviet social imperialism."

As against the reformist left that has lined up with its "own" blood-soaked bourgeoisie, we fight for the ***unconditional military defense of those states where capitalism has been overthrown***—China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea—just as we earlier fought to the end for the defense of the Soviet Union and the East European deformed workers states against capitalist counterrevolution. Integral to such a struggle is our fight for ***workers politicol revolution*** against the bureaucratic Stalinist regimes that undermine the defense and extension of the gains made by the anti-capitalist overturns in these countries.

For Class Against Class!

There is no "common ground" between imperialist president Barack Obama, representative of the capitalist system, which is based on the exploitation of labor, and the working class, including its growing immigrant sector and its strategic black component. Labor desperately needs a fighting leadership to unleash the power of the multiracial working class in struggle for workers' economic interests and for black rights, to organize the unorganized, to demand full citizenship rights for immigrants, and to oppose U.S. imperialism. But the trade-union bureaucrats of both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win federations promote Democratic Party "lesser-evilism." The union tops push chauvinist "America first" patriotism and protectionism, promoting the lie that working people abroad, as opposed to the U.S. capitalist rulers, are the enemies of the American proletariat.

It is only the working class that has the objective interest and social power to smash the capitalist system and lay the basis for an egalitarian socialist society, based on a collectivized economy that produces for human needs, not profits. We fight for a workers party with a revolutionary internationalist program aimed at the liberation of the proletariat and all the oppressed. As opposed to the Obama-enthralled reformist opponents, our revolutionary continuity extends from the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky, who led the 1917 October Revolution. Our watchwords are those of these revolutionary antecedents: for a proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist party to lead the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat and all the oppressed masses. For new Octoher Revolutions! ■

EFCA...

(continued from page 12)

was a cosponsor of the bill in the Senate in 2007 when it was common knowledge that the EFCA would not survive a Bush veto. The EFCA passed the House in a symbolic party-line vote, but was filibustered in the Senate. The backing this bill received from Obama and other Democrats was in the service of undermining class struggle while providing a means to increase the number of dues-paying union members, representing in the Democrats' eyes more money and manpower for future election campaigns under the watch of the pro-capitalist labor tops. Although Democrats posture as "friends of labor," their goal is the same as the Republicans: advancing the interests of capital.

But different sections of the bourgeoisie do not always agree. One ranking Chamber of Commerce official has promised "Armageddon" in the battle over the EFCA, which the founder of Home Depot referred to as "the demise of civilization." Businesses have lined up blue-chip lobbying firms to block it and legal scholars to prove that it is unconstitutional. In the face of this opposition and the economic crisis, the new administration has dropped hints that it intends to hold off on the EFCA and is open to watering it down. When asked about the bill during her Labor Secretary confirmation hearing on January 9, Hilda Solis would not commit to supporting a specific method for union certification. A week later, Obama said of the EFCA in an interview with the *Washington Post* (15 January): "I will certainly listen to all parties involved, including from labor and the business community, which I know considers this the devil incarnate. I will listen to all parties involved and see if there are ways that we can bring those parties together and restore some balance."

The labor tops are so beholden to the Democratic administration that some are now second-guessing whether to push right away for the EFCA for fear of alienating Obama. Recently, Obama's transition team signaled that it would prefer dealing with a single labor federation, as opposed to both the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win coalition, which split apart three and a half years ago. In response, the presidents of 12 of the nation's largest unions immediately jumped into talks to reunite the American labor movement. There are no principled differences between the two federations; their basic strategy is class collaboration, not class struggle. What the labor movement desperately needs is a new, class-struggle leadership.

Binding Arbitration Is a Trap!

In addition to opposing card checks, the bosses are outraged by the arbitration clause in the EFCA, as they cringe at the thought of someone else dictating the terms of employment. Stonewalling on first-contract negotiations after a union is recognized is one common means for employers to derail organizing drives. It is, in fact, the labor tops who wrote the arbitration clause into the EFCA as a means to "guarantee" a first contract without having to engage in struggle.

In his essay "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" (1940), written at the time of the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration, Trotsky observed: "In the United States the Department of Labor with its leftist bureaucracy has as its task the subordination of the trade union movement to the democratic state, and it must he said that this task has up to now been solved with some success." From Trotsky's time through today, the slavish dependence of the trade-union officials on state arhitration of labor disputes has only grown deeper.

Tailing right behind the bureaucrats are left groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO). Demonstrating fully their willingness to accept the capitalist state as a "neutral" arbiter in the class struggle, the ISO applauds the EFCA's arbitration clause as a means to "speed up negotiation of a first union contract" (*Socialist Worker* online, 30 March 2007). Binding arbitration is a trap meant to head off strikes and leave workers with no say in the outcome of the negotiations. It is no accident that the dispute over the last contract for New York City transit workers, which sparked a powerful three-day strike in 2005, ended up in arbitration after angry union members rejected the sellout strike settlement.

In "What's In Store in the Ohama Era?" (*Socialist Worker* online, 20 January), ISO leader Lance Selfa takes stock of the "full-out opposition" to the EFCA, adding: "As this opposition arises, it will put Obama and the Democrats to the test." At bottom, the aim of the ISO is little more than that of the union tops: to resurrect Democratic Party liberalism and to make Obama "fight." We say: ***Break with the Democrats! For a workers party!***

Sheldon Dick

Workers occupy a GM Fisher Body plant in Flint, Michigan, during 1936-37 sit-down strike that won union recognition for UAW.

The EFCA and the Working Class

A coalition of 500 business associations has started to run ads seeking to discredit the EFCA as "undemocratic" for taking away the "secret ballot." The truth is that certification elections are commonly drawn out for months or even years, including when Democrats sit on the labor boards, giving the bosses time to intimidate and terrorize pro-union workers. Employers fire workers in a quarter of all organizing campaigns, threaten workers with plant closings or outsourcing in half and employ mandatory one-on-one anti-union meetings in two-thirds of unionization drives. All these tactics are illegal, but the bosses almost always get away with it or receive a slap on the wrist from the NLRB. From 1999 to 2007, 86,000 workers filed charges over anti-union firings—few ever get their jobs back.

This union-busting is often backed up by the forces of the bosses' state and racist reaction. Historically, organizing in the open shop South meant confrontations with county sheriffs and the Ku Klux Klan. In 1995, an organizing drive at a Perdue poultry plant in Dothan, Alabama, failed after a KKK-style cross-burning at the plant. Shortly before an unsuccessful 1997 certification vote at Smithfield in Tar Heel, "N----r go home" was painted on the side of the union trailer. Recently, anti-immigrant workplace raids by *la migra*, such as at Agri-processors in Iowa, have helped break up union organizing campaigns. There will be no effective defense against union-busting unless the labor movement becomes a powerful champion of black rights and takes up the fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

The reformists in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) have actually lined up with the Chamber of Commerce and its ilk in advocating NLRB-run elections over card-checks as "the most effective way for workers to express what they want regarding unionization" (*Militant*, 9 April 2007). The SWP goes so far as to put a positive spin on union-busting, writing, "Winning such a vote in face of company intimidation efforts means the rank-and-file has become convinced, through its involvement in the struggle, of the need to organize."

In practice, today most workers gain union recognition through card checks. About 300,000 workers joined unions through card checks in 2007 whereas some 60,000 workers gained membership through elections. Normally for a company to respect the card check, it demands of the union concessions, including sweetheart contracts and "neutrality" agreements where the union foregoes the right to attack or even criticize the company. For the union hureaucrats, such compromises are business as usual.

To broaden support for the EFCA, the two main labor federations have circulated petitions within the unions. The AFL-CIO petition states: "This crucial legislation will protect workers' freedom to choose a union and bargain, without management intimidation." The third, and final, provision of the EFCA would increase the penalties for "unfair labor practices" by the hosses. But it is a dangerous illusion to think that the EFCA would safeguard union organizing efforts against employer interference. The union-busting industry of lawyers, spies and security goons rakes in $4 billion annually. If the rules for union certification were to change, so would their tactics. Already there is movement to make it easier to *decertify* the unions.

The fundamental purpose of the labor boards is never that of enforcing the rights of workers but rather maintaining "labor peace," which entails preventing strikes or settling them quickly if they break out. These government boards are in effect strikebreaking agencies even if they occasionally rule against the bosses. Moreover, the EFCA will not prevent employers from unleashing their panoply of union-busting laws and tactics against labor struggle.

While the AFL-CIO petition also speaks of the "middle class," a term meant to blur the line between labor and capital, union militants could sign it and note their objections. Change to Win's petition obliterates this line by stating that the EFCA is "about preserving the American Dream and ensuring that the economy works for all of us." This is a lie about and support for capitalism, and should not be signed. In fact, the capitalist system is based on the exploitation of the wage slave, as Karl Marx explained in *Wage-Labour and Capital* (1849): "A rapid increase of capital is equivalent to a rapid increase of profit. Profit can only increase rapidly if the price of labour, if relative wages, decrease just as rapidly."

Trotskyists and the 1935 Wagner Act

Especially since the days of the New Deal, the trade-union bureaucracy has perpetuated the myth that the right to organize was won as the result of the passage of liberal labor legislation. Enacted at the height of the Great Depression in 1933, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) supposedly "guaranteed" the "right to organize and bargain collectively" in its Section 7(a), added as a sop to the craft AFL leadership. Seizing on it, labor organizers urged workers that "the President wants you to join the union." Intersecting the biggest strike wave since the early '20s, these organizing drives met with a tremendous response, with many taking these promises as good coin. However, the open shop was not smashed, and in most industries NIRA government/company codes were drawn up that simply ratified existing conditions. As a result of the failure by the AFL tops to strike against such codes, tens of thou-

Devastation in Motor City

Getty

Line for food handouts in Detroit, December 2008.

A longtime cadre, Vance, went to major auto plants in Detroit in mid-December to distribute Workers Vanguard *with the front-page article "Bosses Declare War on UAW Workers" (5 December 2008). He was accompanied by two longtime SL sympathizers from the Detroit area. Printed below is his report, edited for publication, of the trip.*

Reporter's Notebook

Soon after I arrived, Matt and I went to the Ford plant in Dearborn. We found the large automobile assembly facility no longer existed. This was the place where we have done sales for years as part of our subscription drive. All that's left is the truck assembly plant. We sold 33 copies of *Warkers Vanguard*. This was pretty good considering the windchill was about zero and it was completely drive-by traffic. The workers on the day shift were overwhelmingly white, about 80 percent from what I saw. The second shift had more black workers, about 40 percent. There was one incident where a white couple drove in, bought a paper, turned around in the parking lot, drove up to me, and the woman handed me a fistful of ones, said thank you and then sped off. White or black, a good number of the workers didn't like what United Auto Workers (UAW) president Ron Gettelfinger was doing, selling out the workers again so that the Big Three carmakers could get government hailouts. One black worker said, "It's embarrassing what he's doing, begging."

Most of the workers would at least throw us a "thumbs up" as they drove by. I am sure auto workers feel very besieged these days as the bourgeois media has pointed to their living standards as the main culprits in capitalist decay. So any sign of support, including from us Marxists, is welcomed.

The next morning Matt and I hit the Chrysler Truck plant in north suburban Warren. At least the wind cooperated so we only had zero degrees to deal with. These workers probably sense the Sword of Damocles over their heads more than most auto workers, as the company they work for is in very bad shape. We sold 21 papers to a pretty small workforce (maybe 150 to 200 people). This was all walk-up traffic. A couple of guys bought two papers each, an extra one to leave lying around the break area.

The suburbs surrounding Detroit resemble suburbs around Chicago, with strip malls and chain restaurants. Once you hit the city, things worsen qualitatively. You can see two and three story buildings just fallen down on themselves. In many instances there are no buildings at all, just open space. As Matt and I drove around we did a little "ghoul tour." As we crossed streets, he would bring up places where comrade so-and-so was mugged or robbed or where so-and-so was shot. Comrades, Detroit was always kind of rough. Matt had called us in Chicago a few weeks ago, saying that, if Detroit was going down, at least let's sell to some plants before they're closed forever. He thinks that Michigan, as a region, is home to the greatest concentration of unemployed skilled workers in the world.

Matt told me he was surprised when he recently found out Detroit's population was now less than 800,000. When he moved there in 1973 there were close to two million people. It's now a question of how much worse this city can get. Any little string of hope is grasped at. The latest hope is Democratic mayor Ken Cockrell Jr. This is what it has come down to: the son of one of the original leaders of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers has been put into power to rebound the city from former mayor Kwame Kilpatrick.

When GM built the Cadillac plant in Hamtramck, "Poletown," that was indeed hallyhooed as a savior. Matt told me how all these grand plans were drawn up. Nothing except the plant was ever built. The most striking thing about the plant is that the area around it looks like Appalachia, when, at least in warmer weather, you can see poor little white kids playing in the dirt and mud in the adjacent neighborhood.

The last plant we sold to was Cadillac on Tuesday afternoon. By now we also had Tom with us. We were able to sell two introductory subscriptions to white guys, one of whom had lots of questions about the military. In all, we sold 35 papers at this location. One woman, a shop steward, told us she was "not happy at all what the union was doing!" While the lack of any fightback from the UAW is pissing off the rank and file, there is nothing people think they can do about it.

When I brought up Obama and the Democrats, black workers thought that the new government had to be better than Bush, but there wasn't euphoria. The few whites I spoke with didn't say much. What people did respond to was the point about organizing the unorganized, particularly auto workers in the South, including in the foreign-owned plants. This point did elicit a few protectionist comments from people. But others thought it would be a good idea if those workers got the same benefits they had.

After things had wound down and Tom was giving me a ride to the airport, he recalled how back in 1985, in response to a call from the UAW Solidarity House to assist striking mineworkers, he was part of a union caravan named "Motown to Coaltown" of hundreds of cars down the interstates to West Virginia. He told me, "Man, with that many cars, each with two or three guys, that's an army! That's what needs to be done now to organize the South." Today, it's qualitatively the same bureaucracy running the UAW. But a quarter century later, the most they can muster is a promise to the bosses to give up virtually everything in two years and sell out the workers.■

sands of workers deserted the unions they had only recently joined.

In 1934, three victorious citywide organizing strikes set the stage for the rise of CIO industrial unionism: one led by Communists in San Francisco, the Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, and a general strike led by left-wing socialists in Toledo. The Trotskyists in Minneapolis mobilized the city's proletariat and its allies in mass struggle, including pitched battles with scabs, cops and National Guard troops. In assessing the strikes, Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon noted in *The History of American Trotskyism* (1944):

> "The modern labor movement must be politically directed because it is confronted by the government at every turn. Our people were prepared for that since they were political people, inspired by political conceptions. The policy of the class struggle guided our comrades; they couldn't be deceived and outmaneuvered, as so many strike leaders of that period were, by this mechanism of sabotage and destruction known as the National Labor Board and all its auxiliary setups. They put no reliance whatever in Roosevelt's Labor Board; they weren't fooled by any idea that Roosevelt, the liberal 'friend of labor' president, was going to help the truck drivers in Minneapolis win a few cents more an hour. They weren't deluded even by the fact that there was at that time in Minnesota a Farmer-Labor Governor, presumed to be on the side of the workers."

Intent on preventing the new wave of labor organizing from falling under the control of union militants and "reds," the Roosevelt administration moved quickly to set up a government-sanctioned mechanism to subordinate the unions to the capitalist state. The result was the 1935 National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act, hailed by union officials as the "Magna Carta of Labor" to this day. The EFCA, like most other federal labor laws, is written as an amendment to the Wagner Act, which established the NLRB and the framework for sweeping federal regulation of labor relations and empowered the government to carve out bargaining jurisdictions and run certification elections.

During the last big push by the union tops for labor law reform some three decades ago, we wrote: "Trotskyists opposed the Wagner Act as a threat to labor's ability to strike" ("California Farm Labor Bill Threatens Right to Strike," *WV* No. 128, 8 October 1976). In fact, as far as we know, the Trotskyists neither explicitly supported nor opposed the Wagner Act. An October 1935 *New International* article by John West (James Burnham) argued:

> "Marxists must be vigilant with respect to it [the Wagner Act]. An attitude of simple denunciation of the Bill as a strike-breaker is not sufficient, and would serve only to confuse union workers and to isolate the Marxists. It must be connected with the lessons of Section 7a, which might be summarized: Take anything it offers, but never depend on it; depend only on independent class activity."

Section 9(c) of the Wagner Act provided that the NLRB could certify unions by relying on a secret ballot election or "any other suitable method." One commonly used "other suitable method" at first was card checks. But actually organizing required the mobilization of millions in militant class struggle, sparked by the 1936-37 Flint sit-down into strikes. The CIO tops, including social democrats and Stalinists, betrayed the evident opportunity to forge an independent workers party by tying the unions to the Democratic Party of Roosevelt and the New Deal.

By the late 1930s, the NLRB was less and less willing to grant card-check recognition. In the wake of the post-World War II strike wave, Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act, which outlawed secondary boycotts and sympathy strikes, allowed states to pass "right to work" laws and demanded loyalty oaths from union officials. A majority of Congressional Democrats voted for this union-busting law. The new provisions were used in short order to strangle strikes and purge militants and "reds" from the unions. This law, as well as later NLRB and court rulings, also made card-check recognition far more difficult. Belying the trade-union bureaucrats' nominal opposition to Taft-Hartley, an AFL-CIO fact sheet on the EFCA states, "just as the NLRB is required to seek a federal court injunction against a union whenever there is reasonable cause to believe the union has violated the secondary boycott prohibitions in the [Taft-Hartley] act, the NLRB must seek a federal court injunction against an employer whenever there is reasonable cause to believe the employer has discharged or discriminated against employees...during an organizing or first contract drive."

In the 1930s, the thousands of militants who considered themselves communists propelled the great industrial union organizing drives forward. Motivated by their ideals of building a society where those who labor rule, they knew that spiking the bosses' attacks on black people and immigrants was crucial. The fight to organize the unorganized could be the crucible in which a revolutionary workers party is forged. Such a party is indispensable to uniting the working class and leading it in the revolutionary overthrow of the bosses' rule.■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Organize the Unorganized!
For a Class-Struggle Leadership of the Unions!

Why Marxists Support the EFCA

No Reliance on the Capitalist State

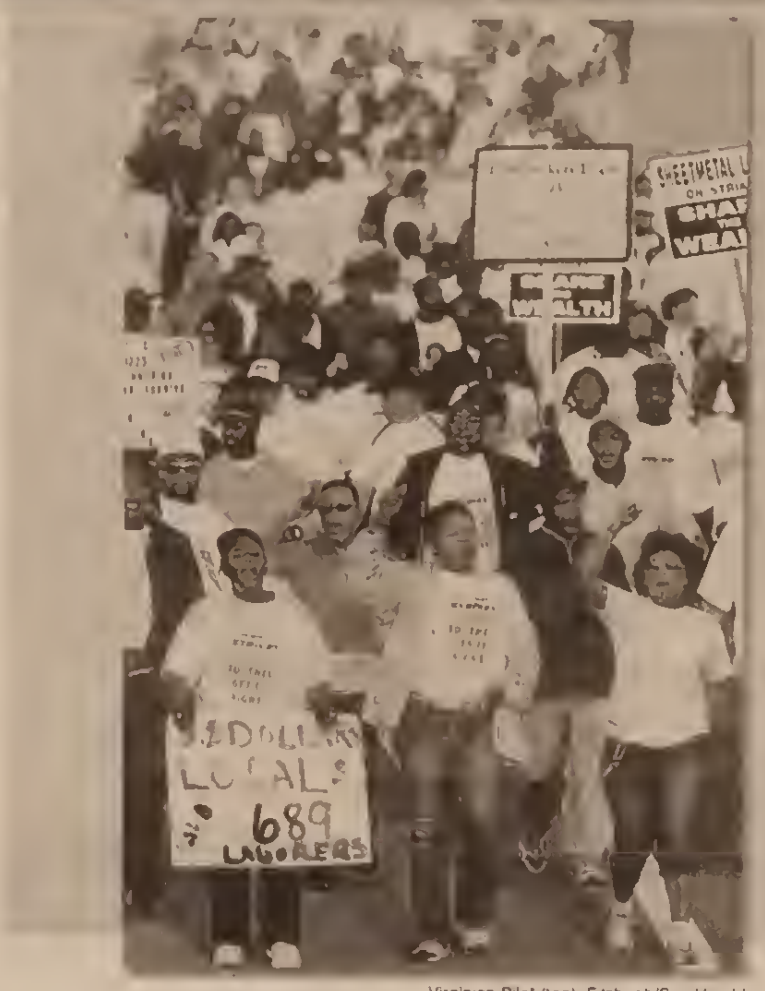
With Democrat Barack Obama in the White House, union officials, having invested $450 million to put him and other Democrats into office, are now eager for "payback." At the top of their wish list is passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), also known as the "card-check bill," which would provide for the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to recognize a union without a certification election when a majority of employees at a workplace sign union authorization cards. This long-stalled bill to ease union organizing is "the most important issue that we have," according to AFL-CIO head John Sweeney.

Notwithstanding a slight upswing in union membership in the first half of last year, the strength of the unions has been on the wane for decades. As of 2007, unions represented 7.5 percent of the nation's private sector workforce, with the total union membership rate hovering around 12.1 percent, down from 35 percent in the 1950s. With the recession deepening, the capitalist ruling class is moving rapidly to attempt to further gut the unions, beginning with the United Auto Workers (UAW). Revitalizing the labor movement is all the more necessary as the bosses try to make working people pay for this crisis.

Dead set on keeping the unions out, conservative politicians, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and others, including large employers that have engaged in union-busting like Wal-Mart, have launched a counteroffensive against the EFCA. The headline of a *New York Times* (9 January) article noted, "Bill Easing Unionizing Is Under Heavy Attack." Indeed, in 2008, business groups spent a combined $50 million on anti-EFCA ads and are now gearing up to spend an additional $200 million in the coming months. With the bosses engaged in an all-out propaganda offensive against it and the unions waging a major campaign to have it enacted, the EFCA represents a referendum on unionization.

Even though it contains an arbitration clause that we oppose, we support the EFCA, as it allows workers to organize and form unions through a streamlined card-check system, bypassing the prolonged balloting process. At the same time, the EFCA in its current form contains a contradiction. Disputes over the first contract at a newly organized worksite could be referred to government arbitrators if after 90 days of negotiations either the union or the employer invokes the option of federal mediation and then at least 30 days of mediation fail to produce an agreement. We oppose the arbitration provision because it is a form of government intervention into the unions' disputes with the bosses. While the purpose of such a provision is to curtail class struggle, there are no legal prohibitions in the EFCA to prevent strike action during this four-month period.

Both partisans and opponents of the bill claim that its passage will bring millions of unorganized workers into the unions. In reality, the balance of forces



Virginian-Pilot (top), Fitzhugh/Sun Herald

Top: UFCW members protest Smithfield Foods in Richmond, Virginia, 2006, during struggle for union recognition. Above: 2,000 striking union workers of Northrop Grumman demonstrate in Pascagoula, Mississippi, March 2007.

in struggle will ultimately determine the success or failure of any unionization campaign. To the extent that the EFCA affords the possibility of strengthening the working class by organizing unions, workers should make use of it. But at the same time workers must beware the EFCA's pitfalls and not rely on it or the capitalist state, which exists to defend the rule and profits of the capitalist class. Last month, workers at the Smithfield Foods hog slaughterhouse in Tar Heel, North Carolina, voted to unionize after a more than 15-year organizing battle. Union officials credited a court-imposed "neutrality" agreement for the success, while the company spokesman claimed the result shows "that the union can win without a card check." In fact, the key was the combativity of the workers, who engaged in walkouts and other protests to win union recognition (see "UFCW Organizes Smithfield Plant," *WV* No. 927, 2 January).

In 1981, the government smashed the PATCO air traffic controllers strike in the most massive union-busting attack since before the CIO was founded in 1935. That strike could have been won, but the union tops refused to call out airline workers to shut down the airports. As we wrote in "Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win" (*WV* No. 349, 2 March 1984): "No decisive gain of labor was ever won in a courtroom or by an act of Congress. Everything the workers movement has won of value has been achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle, on the picket lines, in plant occupations. What counts is power." *For a class-struggle fight to organize the unorganized!*

Break with the Democrats!

Labor is on the ropes, and the criminal policies of the union tops are in no small part responsible. These misleaders have squandered the fighting strength of the unions by shackling them to the bosses' state, especially through the instrument of the Democratic Party. At every turn, the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class" demonstrate their allegiance to the rule of capital, promoting "cooperation" with the employers and policing the workforce on the bosses' behalf. Meanwhile, this bureaucratic layer enjoys access to privileges and perks.

The labor bureaucrats long ago renounced the class-struggle methods that originally built the unions: mass pickets, sit-down strikes, secondary boycotts. This refusal to carry out a hard-fought battle to organize the unorganized is now a dagger aimed at the unions. In the auto industry, the government's proposed bailout requires the UAW to agree to slash its wages and benefits to the levels of its counterparts in the large and growing number of non-union, mainly foreign-owned plants in the U.S. Even more, the government has reserved the right to revoke the loans to the automakers if the UAW were to strike at any time. In the face of this declaration of war, the UAW tops readily rolled over.

Worried about the dramatic drop in union membership and corresponding declines in union economic and political power, the sellouts atop the unions are at the same time committed to playing by the bosses' rules. That's why their primary recourse is to pressure the government to modify those rules. But capitalist "labor law" is ultimately designed to hold the unions captive to the bourgeois order. The war chest wasted on electing representatives of the class enemy last year was never considered by the union tops for strike funds or organizing drives. One-quarter million union members were mobilized for voter turnout, not to build picket lines or engage in strikes.

Obama's support for the EFCA was a major selling point for the union tops. He

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 930 — C-701 — 13 February 2009

Foreclosures, Unemployment, Union Givebacks

Obama: CEO of Bankrupt American Capitalism

Chinn/SF Chronicle

Getty

Left: Furniture being removed from foreclosed home in Oakland. Right: More than 1,000 line up to apply for 35 firefighter positions open in Miami, February 2.

In the past few months, the economic crisis that has been devastating working people for over a year has taken a sharp turn for the worse. In 2008, almost three million workers lost their jobs in this country, with more than half the losses coming in the last three months of the year. In January, nearly 600,000 more workers were thrown out of work. Industrial production is at a 28-year low and, by all indications, the decline is accelerating. Private sector workers are being hit with widespread wage cuts for the first time since the Great Depression of the 1930s—their wages were slashed a total of $23.5 billion in December, following a $12 billion cut in November.

President Barack Obama's proposed solution to the crisis is for the federal government to spend over $800 billion of taxpayers' money in an effort to jump-start the economy. During the election campaign, Obama promised to create five million new jobs; today, he'll be lucky if he can simply stanch the hemorrhaging. The dinosaurs who prowl the halls of Congress are clashing furiously over how to get the "best bang for the buck." Yet they have scant confidence that their fiscal stimulus schemes will do the job. The *New York Times* (29 January) summarized the conclusion of a study by the Congressional Budget Office as follows: "The hole the economy is in is so deep that even the stimulus package will only dig us halfway out."

It is above all the poor and working-class population that is condemned to suffer the consequences of the irrationality of capitalism. Despite skyrocketing unemployment, depleted savings and escalating home foreclosures, 18 states *cut* welfare rolls last year. In Michigan, where layoffs have been particularly severe, welfare rolls were slashed 13 percent. This is a direct consequence of provisions introduced by President Bill Clinton in 1996 that ended "welfare as we know it." Obama has repeatedly singled out Clinton's axing of welfare as a praiseworthy accomplishment.

Immediately upon winning the election, Obama spoke of the need for "sacrifice" in the interests of "national unity." As the new Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, Obama aims to make the working class and oppressed pay in order to restore the profits of the American bourgeoisie. The hundreds of billions of dollars already poured into the coffers of Wall Street plus the hundreds of billions more slated for Obama's stimulus package will be financed by deficit spending—that is, by increased government borrowing on international financial markets. Those loans will ultimately have to be paid back—with interest—out of the tax dollars paid by the working people of this country.

Because Obama's stimulus package includes such things as increased spending on education and aid to states for Medicaid costs, it is being touted by administration supporters as a major social benefits program. This is simply cynical Washington spin. Obama's plan to spend federal dollars comes as state governments, including those run by liberal Democrats, are cutting social spending to the bone. New York governor David Paterson has announced plans to slash more than $9 billion in state spending, primarily on health care and education, while jacking up tuition costs at state universities. Meanwhile, after bankers went ballistic, Obama quickly backed down from his initial proposal to include in his stimulus plan a home foreclosure relief measure allowing courts to revise mortgage contracts.

The bourgeoisie will hardly spend money on improving the condition of the masses unless it is forced to do so. Especially since the counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union in 1991-92, capitalists internationally have sought to increase their competitiveness against their rivals by taking an ax to whatever gains workers have been able to achieve. As Obama prepared to take office, he gave an interview to the *Washington Post* (16 January), which reported his intention "to rein in health-care costs, stabilize Social Security and prevent the Medicare program from bankrupting the government."

Reforms such as Social Security were not enacted as return payment for electoral support by workers, black people and others to the Democratic Party; they were the result of mass social struggle. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal reforms in the 1930s represented an attempt by the bourgeoisie to head off an extended period of deepening leftist political radicalization and hard class struggle that forged industrial unions, many of them led by reds. In 1934, the year before the passage of the Social Security Act, there were three victorious citywide organizing strikes: one led by Communists in San Francisco, the Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters strikes, and a general strike led by left-wing socialists in Toledo. Roosevelt's efforts to keep the working class tied to the Democratic Party were greatly aided by the Stalinist Communist Party, which commanded the loyalty of most left-wing workers and promoted support to the "progressive" Roosevelt administration.

The bourgeoisie always seeks to take back with one hand what it is constrained to grant with the other. To even preserve past gains, as well as to fight for new ones, requires hard class struggle by the working class, standing at the head of all the oppressed.

The main obstacle to such class struggle is the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy, which promotes the lie that the interests of labor and capital are compatible. This bureaucracy, which parasitically sits atop the unions, acts as a transmission belt for pro-capitalist consciousness into the working class. The labor bureaucrats' class collaboration is exemplified by their overwhelming fealty to the Democratic Party, of which they are an integral part. No less than the Republicans, the Democrats are a party of and for the capitalist class—the difference being that while the Republicans make no bones about oppressing working people, the Democrats do the same while proclaiming themselves "friends of labor." To unleash the

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Break with the Democrats! For a Class-Struggle Workers Party!

Obama...

(continued from page 1)

social power of the working class requires a political struggle to replace the union misleaders by a leadership dedicated to the political independence of the proletariat. This is part of the struggle to build a class-struggle workers party that fights for a workers government.

The U.S. Bourgeoisie and the World Economy

What began as a financial meltdown centered on the U.S. housing market is now a full-fledged economic slump on a world scale. By one estimate, global manufacturing production fell in the last three months of 2008 at an annualized rate of almost 20 percent. The automobile industry internationally is seeing the sharpest drop in sales in its history; worldwide production of goods, from computer chips to machine tools, is plunging. And the collapse of the housing market continues apace, especially in the U.S. and Britain. Today, one U.S. homeowner in ten is in foreclosure or otherwise at risk of losing his home.

Getty

Food distribution in Florida church, March 2008. As economic crisis deepens, working people are struggling to make ends meet.

Japan, the world's second-largest economy, is particularly vulnerable because exports account for almost half of its manufacturing output. In December, Japanese industrial output went into a record slide, caused mainly by the plummeting demand in the U.S. Meanwhile, the British economy is a basket case. Average debt per person in Britain is 180 percent of disposable income, the highest of any of the G7 industrialized countries. The pound sterling is practically in free fall, threatening much deeper hardship for the country's already impoverished working people. According to the London *Telegraph* (6 February), the number of manufacturing jobs in Britain will drop below three million by the end of 2009. The *Telegraph* notes: "The last time that there were fewer than 3 million manufacturing workers was in about 1845, the climax of the Industrial Revolution."

The economic crisis has especially buffeted the periphery of Europe, where smaller countries have fewer resources to defend their economies. In December, Greece was swept by weeks of rioting, mainly by anarchist and other student youth, that intersected planned strikes and protests by the trade unions against the impact of the economic crisis on workers. On January 13, the cobbled streets of Riga, the capital of Latvia, resembled a war zone as protesters smashed up the finance ministry in protest against wage cuts and tax increases. A few days later, police in Lithuania fired rubber bullets on a trade-union march of 7,000 people. Smaller protests and clashes erupted in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Hungary. In late January, Iceland's government fell after the collapse of its banks triggered weeks of protests against soaring unemployment and inflation.

In France, a January 29 nationwide strike called by the country's eight main trade unions shut down schools, post offices and much of the transport system, while mobilizing a large number of automobile and other private sector workers. As conservative president Nicolas Sarkozy proposed his own stimulus plan, some 2.5 million workers demonstrated across the country for higher wages and job security.

The fact that the crisis is now international means that there is no obvious engine to drive economic recovery. Exports and sales abroad by U.S. multinationals have until recently been among the few bright spots for American capitalists. Over the past two years, three-quarters of the growth in U.S. output came from net exports. During the same period, the share of U.S. corporate profits from overseas business has ballooned from 26 percent to a record 37 percent. Now those props are being knocked away.

The economic slowdown in the U.S. has been accompanied by increasing calls for chauvinist protectionism, pushed by both Democratic politicians and the trade-union bureaucracy. Thus, the stimulus bill as passed by the House contains a "buy American" provision requiring that "all of the iron and steel" used in any project funded by the bill must be made in the U.S.A. One is reminded of the 1930 Smoot-Hawley Act, which greatly increased tariffs on U.S. imports and deepened the effects of the Great Depression.

Protectionism is deadly poison for workers in the U.S., not least because it serves to conceal the fact that it is the capitalists and their system that are responsible for the destitution of the working class; it is based on the lie that the enemies of U.S. workers are the workers of other countries. (The United Steelworkers bureaucrats have twisted into more contortions than a pretzel trying to explain how the "buy American" policy that they support would supposedly benefit Canadian members of their union.) Blaming foreign workers for the loss of U.S. jobs feeds into anti-immigrant bigotry and support for the government's deportation of undocumented workers. (For an example in Britain, see article, page 3.)

In opposition to protectionism, the labor movement must fight for international labor solidarity, linking the economic and other struggles of workers in the U.S. with those of workers around the world, particularly in such semicolonial countries as Mexico. This must be part of a fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. What is ultimately necessary is the sweeping away of the global capitalist system through a series of socialist revolutions that establish an international planned economy.

Defend the Chinese Deformed Workers State!

There is one major country centrally involved in the world economy that is *not* capitalist: China. China has become the second leading exporter of manufactured goods after Germany and has displaced Japan as the largest holder of U.S. government securities. Despite its integration into the world capitalist market, China remains a bureaucratically ruled deformed workers state, structurally similar to the former Soviet Union and its East European bloc partners.

The 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalist/landlord rule and ripped the world's most populous nation out of the clutches of the imperialist powers that had long held China in their grip. Emerging from the military victory of the peasant-guerrilla forces led by the Stalinist Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the People's Republic of China was established. Despite Stalinist bureaucratic parasitism and mismanagement, the 1949

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TROTSKY

LENIN

A Salute to Charles Darwin

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin and the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth. Through his theory of evolution through natural selection, or, as he preferred to call it, "descent with modification," Darwin unshackled biological science from the chains of religion and metaphysics by providing a materialist explanation for the evolution of life on this planet through careful, meticulously recorded studies of variation within species. Yet, even as it forms the basis of modern biology, evolution continues to be explosive in the U.S., a constant target of the fundamentalist Christian right and reactionaries, including because it eliminates any scientific basis for racism. As we wrote in a 1985 *amici curiae* brief filed by the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee in the Supreme Court against the teaching of the mytb of Biblical creationism in Louisiana schools: "The study of scientific evolution is fundamental to man's quest for a materialist understanding of our world and human society, not the least because it provides material evidence that we are all part of the same human race, definitively destroying the myths of racial superiority."

Charles Darwin himself was an ardent opponent of slavery. In a 5 June 1861 letter to Harvard botanist Asa Gray, a devout Protestant who arranged for the *Origin of Species* to be published in America, Darwin wrote in the early days of the U.S. Civil War: "Some few, and I am one of them, even wish to God, though at the loss of millions of lives, that the North would proclaim a crusade against slavery. In the long-run, a million horrid deaths would be amply repaid in the cause of humanity.... Great God! How I should like to see the greatest curse on earth—slavery—abolished!" And in a 17 September 1861 letter to Gray, he wrote: "If abolition does follow with your victory, the whole world will look brighter in my eyes & in many eyes. It would be a great gain even to stop the spread of Slavery into the Territories:—if that be possible without abolition, which I should have doubted."

Charles Darwin also corresponded with his friend on the question of religion, replying to Gray's defense of "intelligent design" in a 22 May 1860 letter: "I had no intention to write atheistically, but I own that I cannot see as plainly as others do...evidence of design and beneficence on all sides of us. There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae [parasitic wasps] with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of Caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice."

In the following excerpt from an article (written in 1919 and revised in 1922) on the renegade from Marxism Karl Kautsky, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky compared the historic breadth of Darwin's scientific studies to Marx's study of human society, pointing out that both reveal that long periods of seeming equilibrium are periodically interrupted by tumultuous periods of rapid, revolutionary change.

* * * * *

The Darwinian theory of the origin of species encompasses the entire span of development of the plant and animal kingdoms. The struggle for survival and the processes of natural and sexual selection proceed continuously and uninterruptedly. But if one could observe these processes with ample time at one's disposal—a millennium, say, as the smallest unit of measure—one would undoubtedly discover with one's own eyes that there are long ages of relative equilibrium in the world of living things, when the laws of selection operate almost imperceptibly, and the different species remain relatively stable, seeming the very embodiment of Plato's ideal types. But there are also ages when the equilibrium between plants, animals, and their geophysical environment is disrupted, epochs of geobiological crisis, when the laws of natural selection come to the fore in all their ferocity, and evolution passes over the corpses of entire plant and animal species. On this gigantic scale Darwinian theory stands out above all as the theory of critical epochs in the plant and animal development.

Marx's theory of the historical process encompasses the entire history of human social organization. But in ages of relative social equilibrium the fact that ideas depend upon class interests and the property system remains masked. The age of revolution is Marxism's school of advanced study. Then the struggle of classes resulting from systems of property assumes the character of open civil war, and the systems of government, law, and philosophy are stripped bare and revealed as instruments in the service of classes. Marxist theory itself was first formulated in a prerevolutionary period, when the classes were searching for a new orientation, and it achieved its final form through the experiences of revolution and counterrevolution in 1848 and the following years.

—Leon Trotsky, "Karl Kautsky" (1922), reprinted in *Portraits Political & Personal* (Pathfinder Press, 1977)

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Unions Must Defend Immigrant Workers!

Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!

Britain

LONDON—For over a week, thousands of construction workers at oil refineries and power plants across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland staged a series of strikes demanding "British jobs for British workers." The strikes were not intended to secure more jobs or indeed any gains for the working class as a whole, nor to defend existing jobs. They were about redividing the existing pool of jobs according to the nationality of the workers. These reactionary strikes, pitting British workers against foreign workers and immigrants, are detrimental to the interests of the multiethnic working class in Britain and those of the workers of Europe as a whole. The main strike slogan, "British jobs for British workers," long associated with the fascists, was recently affirmed by Labour prime minister Gordon Brown at the 2007 Labour Party conference. The strikes received gushing sympathy from the likes of the virulently anti-immigrant, anti-working-class *Daily Mail* and were actively supported by the fascist BNP who churned out racist garbage, including the claim that British workers were losing out to foreigners.

The strike wave centred on Lindsey refinery in Lincolnshire, owned by French oil giant Total. Part of a construction project was subcontracted to IREM, an Italian contractor, which brought in Italian and Portuguese workers, and did not hire any British workers. A similar situation exists at Staythorpe power station in Nottinghamshire where Spanish subcontractors brought in their own crews. According to reports of the settlement, over 100 "new" construction jobs have been created at Lindsey, earmarked for British workers. The real outcome however will reverberate against foreign and immigrant workers, not least on building sites such as the 2012 Olympic projects where over a third of the workers are immigrants and where in recent months some 200 Romanian workers were removed during a clampdown on "illegal" foreign labour. More broadly, the protectionist poison emanating from the strikes sends a chilling message to all immigrants and minorities, fuelling racism and reinforcing national divisions between workers in Britain and their class brothers in other European countries.

The responsibility for this social-chauvinist crusade lies with the Labourite leadership of the Unite and GMB trade unions, who embraced this patriotic crusade as naturally as they embraced Labour's racist "war on terror" that is directed against Muslims. Particular blame lies with Peter Taaffe's Socialist Party, which had a member on the strike committee and authored its key demands, while whitewashing its chauvinist character. Throughout what the Socialist Party calls "one of the most significant strike waves in recent times," Italian migrant workers have been holed up in a rusting barge in Grimsby, fearing for their lives, not without reason: according to the *Times* (31 January), 40 striking construction workers from Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire—the hub of the racist strikes—visited the Italian workers to tell them to "go back to your own country." Generalised insecurity and fear about job losses caused by the worldwide economic recession provide fertile ground for the kind of chauvinism that this strike wave has unleashed.

PA

Protectionist rally against foreign workers at Lindsey oil refinery, January 30.

Trade-union leaders have been cynically hanging on about British workers being discriminated against. Derek Simpson, co-leader of the union Unite, addressed "the growing problem of UK workers being excluded from important engineering and construction projects" and demanded that "companies involved in engineering and construction projects give UK workers equal opportunities to build Britain's infrastructure" (Unite statement, 30 January). The Labourite bureaucracy's touching concern for "equal opportunities" for British workers stands in sharp contrast to their abject betrayal of class struggles by Britain's multiethnic working class, from the Grunwick strike by Asian women in 1976 to the Labourites' knifing of the great miners strike of 1984-85, to the sellout of the Heathrow airport strike in 2005 in solidarity with over 600 Asian women who were sacked.

The bureaucracy's claim that British workers are being "discriminated" against by foreign contractors rests on a "posted" workers directive in European Union (EU) law, under which subcontractors can supply their "own" workers to work on short-term projects in other EU countries. No British workers were fired at either Lindsey or Staythorpe. Until the workers take power, we will not be in a position to worry about the ebbs and flows of labour migration or the world economy more generally. The bottom line for the trade-union movement must not be *whom* the contractors hire, but at *what rate of pay and under what conditions they work*. The way to undercut attempts by the bosses to "level down" the wages and working conditions, including safety standards, of all workers, by playing off one nationality against the other, is for the unions to demand: *Full union pay for all work at the prevailing rate, no matter who does the job! Equal pay for equal work!* This poses the need for international collaboration between construction workers across European countries.

The chauvinist nature of the "British jobs" campaign is starkly obvious when viewed through the lens of workers across the channel. Indeed, protectionism cuts both ways: Italian workers (including IREM workers!), who are currently working alongside British construction workers in northeast Italy, could easily retaliate with strikes and mobilisations demanding "Italian jobs for Italian workers," which would undoubtedly get the support of the Italian fascists. According to figures from the European Commission, 47,000 British workers were temporarily "posted" to other EU countries in 2006, which is three times more than the 15,000 foreign workers "posted" to Britain at the time (*Financial Times*, 3 February). Regarding the British strike, a spokesman for the General Confederation of Italian Workers (CGIL), Guglielmo Epifani, said, "we have to be careful, because if unemployment is used against workers from other countries" it would mean "Italians could only work in Italy, English in England and the French in France" (Reuters, 5 February).

The capitalist system is based on the brutal exploitation of all labour, and the ruling class inflames racial and ethnic hostilities to keep the working class divided and thus ensure greater profits. When construction is booming it relies on immigrants, who in Britain were historically Irish but today are drawn heavily from East Europe. With the advent of a severe global recession, the scramble for a diminishing number of jobs is becoming more intense. This scramble is particularly acute in construction where temporary contract work and job insecurity are endemic and where the system of subcontracting drives wages down lower and increases the bosses' opportunities for divide-and-rule.

Labourite Reformism and Protectionism

Rather than wage a fight for jobs for *all* construction workers, which requires an internationalist perspective, and championing the rights of immigrants, the reformist trade-union bureaucracy pandered to the reactionary demand "British jobs for British workers," even as they have condemned BNP incursions into the strike. On behalf of Unite, Derek Simpson issued a statement saying: "Trade unionists stand against everything the BNP stand for. We have warned union members on construction sites to remain vigilant when it comes to ultra right wing leeches," while asserting that the industrial action was "not about race or immigration, it's about class." But any mobilisation of workers on the basis of protectionism is poisonous to class consciousness and plays into the hands of the fascists. It serves to reinforce anti-immigrant racism and weakens the capacity of the working class to defend its own interests. The bureaucracy uses protectionism as a cover for rejecting class struggle in favour of class collaboration. What's needed is to mobilise the multiethnic working class *against* the Brown-led Labour government for jobs for *all*. This requires a political fight to replace the current union misleaders—the labour lieutenants of capital—with a class-struggle leadership. *Trade unions must oppose anti-immigrant racism! Down with protectionist poison!*

Much of the Labourite reformist left managed to take an elementary position of opposition to the reactionary strikes. In a 31 January statement, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) correctly noted that these strikes "are based around the wrong slogans and target the wrong people," adding that "those who urge on these strikes are playing with fire." Workers Power "unreservedly oppose" the strikes saying, "the strikers' target is not their employers but 100 Italian and Portuguese workers" (*Workers Power*, February 2009). A leaflet (undated) issued by Gerry Downing, a member of the Socialist Fight organisation, says, "Socialist Fight (SF) unequivocally opposes the 'wildcat' strikes and their outcome because they were called on the reactionary basis of 'British jobs for British workers'" and "it was on this xenophobic basis they were spread, with the assistance of the right wing media and on this basis they were tacitly endorsed by the entire Unite and GMB leaderships. And it was on this basis they were settled."

continued on page 10

Full Union Pay for All Work!

Getty

London, September 2007: Kingston branch of Northern Rock during first run on a British bank in 150 years, as tens of thousands besieged branches throughout the country.

Young Spartacus

Revolutionary Marxists and the Fight for Black Freedom

To celebrate Black History Month, we print below an edited version of a public class given by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on 16 August 2008 for the Bay Area Spartacus Youth Club.

Library of Congress

Detroit News

Above: Heroic Massachusetts 54th Regiment charging Fort Wagner in South Carolina during Civil War, July 1863. Below: Striking auto workers, Detroit, 1945.

The subject of this educational, the black question and revolutionary integrationism, has a special significance for me personally. The program and especially the strategy of revolutionary integrationism was the single most important reason why I joined the Spartacist tendency (it was not yet a league) in 1965 at the age of 21. Like most young leftist radicals at the time, I started out as a liberal idealist. I was impelled ever further to the left by the contradiction between my liberal democratic ideals and the actual policies and practices of the U.S. government both at home and abroad, under both the Republicans and Democrats.

When I graduated high school in 1961, the American South was still a white racist police state in which blacks were deprived of all basic democratic rights and freedoms. In the North, blacks were concentrated in the impoverished inner-city ghettos. Internationally, the U.S. government was supporting right-wing dictatorships, for example, in Latin America; reactionary feudalist regimes like the Saudi Arabian monarchy; and European colonial rule, for example, the French in Algeria.

I was a member of the political generation called the New Left. Unlike the "Old Left," the New Left viewed the basic conflict in the world, including in the U.S., not as one between the working class and the capitalist class but rather between the oppressed non-white masses—peasants, workers, the urban poor—and the white American ruling class. This worldview was conditioned by the major events and struggles in the world at the time, including in the U.S. American society was being disrupted and polarized by the civil rights movement, first in the South and then extending into the North. The Cuban Revolution had occurred a few years earlier. Algeria had just won its independence from the French after a prolonged and especially bloody national liberation struggle. And in South Vietnam, a Communist-led, peasant-based insurgency was threatening to overthrow the U.S. puppet regime.

During the early-mid 1960s, there was a widespread leftist radicalization among black youth, not only college students but also young black workers and lumpenized ghetto youth. In 1963 I was, for a few months, a member of the youth group of the Progressive Labor Movement, a recently formed Maoist-Stalinist organization. On one occasion I was selling its journal, the *Marxist-Leninist Quarterly*, and I approached a couple of young black guys. They waved me off, saying: "Man, we know all that. When the shooting starts, call us, we'll be there." In one sense they were just being smart alecks. But they were also in their own way expressing hostility to the racist capitalist-imperialist system as they understood it. At the time most blacks, especially young blacks, opposed the war in Vietnam while most whites, including white workers, supported it out of anti-Communism. The prevailing attitude toward the war among black youth was expressed a few years later by the boxing champion Muhammad Ali when he refused to be inducted into the armed forces. He said: "No Viet Cong" —that's what the South Vietnamese Communists were usually called—"ever called me n----r."

Insofar as New Left radicals had a strategy for establishing socialism on a world scale, it was by increasingly weakening and isolating American imperialism through mainly peasant-based revolutions in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This idea was expressed a few years later by Che Guevara in the slogan, "Two, three, many Vietnams." Unlike most New Leftists, I didn't see how it was possible to build socialist societies in Latin America, India and East Asia as long as the U.S. remained a capitalist-imperialist state. If the American ruling class felt its existence was seriously threatened by Communist-led revolutions and states in those regions, it could resort to nuclear weapons. At the same time, I couldn't see how a socialist revolution was possible in the U.S. in a historically meaningful time period. The large majority of the working class was white. And most white workers had racial prejudices to some extent; they supported U.S. imperialist militarism out of anti-Communist sentiment and, in some cases, out of racist disdain for the peoples of what was later called the Third World.

I wrestled with this problem for a year or so. And the concept of revolutionary integrationism as put forward by the Spartacist tendency provided a solution, a key to unlocking the potential for a proletarian socialist revolution in the bastion of world imperialism. Black workers, with their generally higher level of political consciousness and greater opposition to U.S. imperialist militarism, could act as a *lever* to move the mass of more backward white workers toward a class-struggle program and outlook.

For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

As Richard S. Fraser stated in his 1955 document, "For the Materialist Conception of the Negro Question":

> "One of the main factors which prevents the development of class consciousness in the American working class is race prejudice. Specifically: white chauvinism....
>
> "Segregation is the foundation of prejudice. The Negroes, in their struggle against segregation are constantly clearing the ground for the emergence of class consciousness in the working class as a whole.
>
> "It is the historical role of the Negro struggle to break down race prejudice in the working class and thereby to lead white workers toward class consciousness.
>
> "If the Negro struggle should change its course and strike out for racial independence, it would deprive the working class of its most class conscious, and advanced segments."
>
> —reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised), "What Strategy for Black Liberation? Trotskyism vs. Black Nationalism" (September 1978)

This was restated by the early Spartacist League in our basic document on the black question, "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom": "Because of their position as both the most oppressed and also the most conscious and experienced section [of the American working class], revolutionary black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the coming American revolution" (*Spartacist* supplement, May-June 1967). Concretely, we put forward as a transitional demand directed at civil rights activists the formation of a South-wide Freedom Labor Party. Such a party would combine the struggle for black democratic rights and social equality with the struggle of labor against capital, for example, by promoting the unionization of the multiracial working class in the South.

Unlike in the 1960s, today there does not exist a mass black movement and there is relatively little working-class struggle of any kind. Nonetheless, black workers are generally politically to the left of the mass of white workers, for example, in their attitude toward U.S. military adventures abroad. Consider the current issue of *Workers Vanguard* with the headline "U.S. Imperialists Out of Afghanistan, Iraq!" (No. 918, 1 August 2008). In selling this to a group of mainly black workers, you would get a more positive or, at least, less negative response than in selling it to a group of predominantly white workers.

We describe blacks in the U.S. as an oppressed race-color caste integrated into the American capitalist economy while segregated at the bottom of American society. However, the idea that blacks are an embryonic nation was long discussed and debated within the American Trotskyist movement. Trotsky himself tentatively advanced this position in the 1930s. What is a nation and how is it different from a caste? What programmatic conclusions follow from recognizing that an oppressed people are a nation? These are the central themes addressed in Fraser's 1955 document. Although he does not describe American blacks as a caste, that is the substance of his analysis.

A nation is a group of people who usually share a distinct language, culture and also territory. But the most basic character of a nation is the capacity to form a separate political economy, an independent system for the production and circulation of commodities. A nation can, under certain historical circumstances, become an independent bourgeois state with its own propertied and exploited classes. Our basic program with respect to an oppressed nation is the right of self-determination, that is, the right to secede

from the state of the oppressor nation and form its own nation-state.

A caste is a group of people—who may be demarcated by race, ethnicity or some other factor—who occupy a certain position within the hierarchical structure of a given social and economic order. The concept of caste derives from Hindu society in India. All Hindus are born into castes that determine their future place in the social hierarchy. At the bottom of Hindu society are the so-called "untouchables."

How many of you know who C. Vann Woodward is? He was a well-known white left-liberal historian of the American South. In his memoirs, *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History* (1986), he recounted:

> "A new and extraordinary foreign perspective came my way during the Second World War while I was on duty as a naval officer in India. With a letter of introduction in hand, I sought out Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, acclaimed leader of India's millions of untouchables and later a figure of first importance in Indian constitutional history. He received me cordially at his home in New Delhi and plied me with questions about the black 'untouchables' of America and how their plight compared with that of his own people."

As Fraser emphasized, blacks have always played an integral and important role in the American capitalist economy since its beginning as a British colony in the 17th century. Racial oppression has always been directly bound up with class exploitation—first for slaves, then for tenant farmers and then for a component of the industrial working class. Historically, the basic thrust of mass black struggle has been to remove the obstacles separating black people from the rest of American society in order to achieve social and economic as well as political equality with the white majority. But that equality can be achieved only through the overthrow of capitalism and its replacement by a planned socialist economy under a multiracial workers government. This is the crux of revolutionary integrationism.

Black Oppression: Bedrock of American Capitalism

Blacks were originally brought to this country from Africa as slaves to work the agricultural plantations of the Southern colonies of British North America. They became the main labor force producing the country's major agricultural exports —tobacco, sugar and later cotton—during the colonial era and under the American bourgeois state until the Civil War in the 1860s. Thus black chattel slavery in the South was a central factor in the development of mercantile, financial and later industrial capitalism in the North.

However, eventually the conflicts of interest between the Northern capitalists and Southern plantation owners, mainly over control of the national government, led to the Civil War, which, when the North won, resulted in the abolition of slavery. Here I want to emphasize that blacks played an important role in their own emancipation. During the war, hundreds of thousands of blacks fled from the plantations and took refuge behind the lines of the Union Army. At first they served the Union forces mainly as laborers. But by the war's end, nearly 200,000 black soldiers and sailors served in the Union Army and Navy.

New York Times

New York City garment district, July 1964: Spartacist-initiated rally to mobilize labor in defense of ghetto masses during Harlem cop riot.

In the decade following the war, the Northern ruling class carried out a policy called Radical Reconstruction in the South under the occupation of the Union Army. Black men (all women were disenfranchised at the time) were given the right to vote and played an active role in political life. There were black judges, state legislators, even U.S. Congressmen. However the Northern capitalists, given their basic economic interests, did not expropriate the land of the former slave plantations and distribute it to the black freedmen. Most blacks therefore became tenant farmers on land owned by whites and were exploited through sharecropping arrangements, debt peonage and other mechanisms. This formed the economic basis for the restoration of white-supremacist political rule in the South when the Union Army was withdrawn in 1877 to cement the renewed alliance between the Northern and Southern propertied classes. Blacks were subjected to legally enforced racial segregation and stripped of all democratic rights. They were held down by savage state repression reinforced by the racist terror of the Ku Klux Klan.

Prior to the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the large majority of blacks lived in the rural South. During the war there was a substantial migration of blacks to the Northern cities where many found employment in major industries like steel and meatpacking. Racial prejudice among white workers therefore became a major obstacle to working-class organization and struggle even at the most basic trade-union level.

At the same time, the black question was posed for the early American Communist Party. The impetus for this came from Communist leaders in Russia like Lenin and Trotsky. The founding leaders of the American Communist Party like James P. Cannon had come out of the left wing of the Socialist Party and/or the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. The position of these tendencies on the black question can be characterized as color-blind workerism. This was clearly expressed by prominent Socialist leader Eugene V. Debs: "We have nothing special to offer the Negro, and we cannot make separate appeals to all the races. The Socialist Party is the party of the whole working class, regardless of color—the whole working class of the whole world."

The position of the Bolsheviks toward the many oppressed nationalities in tsarist Russia was very different. In order to combat and partly overcome the national divisions within the working class in the Russian empire, the Bolsheviks actively championed the rights and interests of the oppressed non-Russian peoples. And Communist leaders like Lenin and Trotsky applied similar principles to blacks in the U.S. They recognized and insisted that American Communists must actively fight against the oppression of black people in all its aspects. Not to do so would passively reinforce racial prejudices among white workers. And if the Communists did not fight against racial oppression, the mass of blacks would support liberal bourgeois parties that claimed to stand for their rights and interests.

The Revolutionary Tendency and the Civil Rights Movement

James P. Cannon, in an essay on the black question and the early Communist Party written in the late 1950s, emphasized:

> "After November, 1917 this new doctrine —with special emphasis on the Negroes —began to be transmitted to the American communist movement with the authority of the Russian Revolution behind it. The Russians in the Comintern started on the American communists with the harsh, insistent demand that they shake off their own unspoken prejudices, pay attention to the special problems and grievances of the American Negroes, go to work among them, and champion their cause in the white community....
>
> "The influence of Lenin and the Russian Revolution, even debased and distorted as it later was by Stalin, and then filtered through the activities of the Communist Party in the United States, contributed *more than any other influence from any source* to the recognition, and more or less general acceptance, of the Negro question as a *special* problem of American society—a problem which cannot be simply subsumed under the general heading of the conflict between capital and labor, as it was in the pre-communist radical movement."
>
> —"The Russian Revolution and the American Negro Movement," *The First Ten Years of American Communism* (1962)

Not coincidentally, when Cannon wrote this essay the Southern civil rights movement, struggling against legalized segregation and for democratic rights, was agitating and polarizing American society and dominating the country's political life. As it developed, this movement offered a short-lived opportunity for even a small revolutionary party to make a historic breakthrough. By the early 1960s, a large and growing current of young black militants was breaking to the left of the liberal reformism and pacifism of Martin Luther King but had not yet latched on to separatist ideology. These young militants were experienced in struggle and were leading and organizing a mass movement that included large numbers of black workers. And many of them could have been won to a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party on the programmatic basis of revolutionary integrationism.

That was the perspective that the Revolutionary Tendency (RT, the forerunner of the SL) fought for at the time within the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the historic party of American Trotskyism. However, by then the SWP had moved sharply to the right. Its leadership willfully abstained from the civil rights movement while cheerleading from afar for both the liberal reformism of King and the reactionary separatism of the Nation of Islam. Against this, a 1963 RT document stated:

> "The rising upsurge and militancy of the

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Marxist Bulletin 5 REVISED

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Seizing the reins as Commander-in-Chief of racist U.S. imperialism, Barack Obama paid homage to the founders of this country, which was built on the bodies of black slaves and extended through bloody conquest. This included the invasion of Mexico in 1846, in which half of Mexico was annexed in the interests of the Southern slavocracy. Today, Obama's "national unity" appeals are designed to refurbish the "democratic" credentials of American imperialism in order to jack up the brutal exploitation of the working class, blacks, immigrants and all the oppressed in this country and to pursue repression and conquest abroad. Exposing the true history on which racist American imperialism was founded is part of our commitment to the cause of black freedom and the emancipation of the working class through victorious socialist revolution in the bastion of world imperialism.

- **Finish the Civil War— For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!**
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Black Freedom...

(continued from page 5)

> black revolt and the contradictory and confused, groping nature of what is now the left wing in the movement provide the revolutionary vanguard with fertile soil and many opportunities to plant the seeds of revolutionary socialism. Our task is to create a Trotskyist tendency in the broad left wing of the movement, while building that left wing.... We must consider non-intervention in the crisis of leadership a crime of the worst sort."
>
> —"The Negro Struggle and the Crisis of Leadership," reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 (Revised)

Over the next year or so the leaders and members of the RT were expelled from the SWP. The early Spartacist tendency then actively intervened in the civil rights struggles in the South as well as the North, raising demands such as for a Freedom Labor Party, for a Southern unionization drive backed by organized labor nationwide, and for armed self-defense against the Klan and other racist terrorists. This important chapter in our history is well documented in the early issues of *Spartacist*. Our forces, however, were very small and predominantly white. And the main body of young black activists was rapidly moving toward separatism.

To understand why that happened it's necessary to consider the civil rights movement when it came North in the mid 1960s and how it differed from the Southern movement. The core demands of the Southern movement were for an end to legalized segregation and for democratic rights, centrally the right to vote. By the early 1960s, the dominant sections of the American ruling class were moving to bring the legal and political structure of the South into line with the bourgeois-democratic norms in the rest of the country. An important underlying factor was the Cold War conflict with the Soviet Union. Legally enforced white supremacy and racial segregation in the South had become an increasing embarrassment for American imperialism internationally, especially in the countries of Asia and Africa, most of them former European colonies.

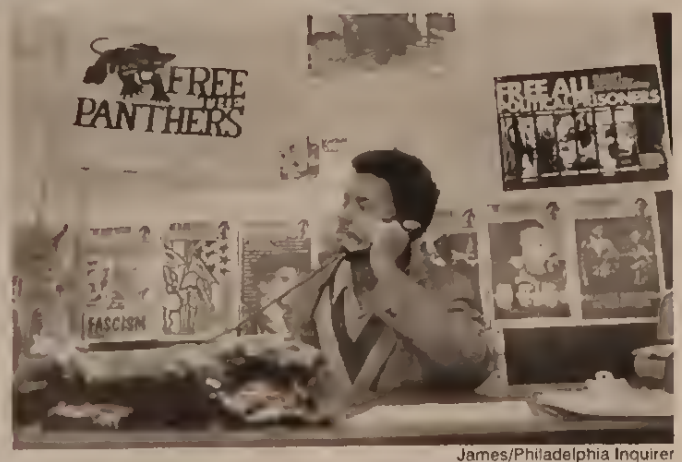
The Civil Rights Movement in the North

As it happened, in 1956 at the age of 12 I spent three or four months in Hot Springs, Arkansas, where I attended a legally segregated, white junior high school. At the time federal courts had ordered school integration in Arkansas and other Southern states. And many of my classmates, knowing I was from New York, asked me what it was like to go to school with blacks. I said I didn't know because there were no blacks in the school I went to in Queens.

The North was just as segregated as the South, at a personal level maybe more so. But the main basis of that segregation was the atomized workings of the capitalist economy. Blacks were, proverbially, the last hired and the first fired. Reinforcing these basic economic factors were certain laws, which, though they did not explicitly refer to race, in fact enforced segregation. Most blacks who lived in the ghettos did so out of economic necessity. However, their children then went to segregated public schools because the law mandated that students attend schools in their neighborhoods. In addition, there was white racial prejudice that could and did express itself in mass violence. For example, when in 1966 Martin Luther King led a march for "open housing" into the white Chicago suburb of Cicero, it was met and driven back by a racist mob.

A major demand of the civil rights movement in the North was for "open housing." But even if realtors could have been compelled by law to sell homes in better-off white suburbs to black families from Harlem or Chicago's South Side, how many black families could have afforded such homes? The everyday conditions of life facing the mass of blacks—widespread and chronic unemployment,

Ligalo/Philadelphia Bulletin



James/Philadelphia Inquirer

Left: 1970 police raid on Philadelphia Black Panther Party office. Right: Mumia Abu-Jamal as Minister of Information for Philadelphia Black Panthers in 1969. Persecuted for his political beliefs, Mumia has been on death row since his 1982 frame-up conviction.

rat-infested slums, rampant police brutality—could not be eradicated by Congress passing another Civil Rights Act. What working-class and poor blacks hoped to achieve through the civil rights movement in the North would have required a radical restructuring of the American economy and a massive redistribution of wealth. And that the American ruling class was not going to do.

Consequently, civil rights agitation generated a rapidly rising level of frustrated expectations, especially among lumpenized black youth, which exploded in what came to be called the ghetto rebellions in the mid-late 1960s in major Northern

Merit

July 1967 Spartacist leaflet issued in response to military suppression of Newark ghetto uprising.

cities. Black youth took to the streets, battled the cops, looted and trashed stores. We wrote at time:

> "As the struggle against the police expands, the black street-fighters turn on the merchants and shopkeepers, the visible representatives of the oppressive class society, and smash whatever cannot be carried off. Yet despite the vast energies expended and the casualties suffered, these outbreaks have changed nothing. This is a reflection of the urgent need for organizations of real struggle, which can organize and direct these energies toward conscious political objectives. It is the duty of a revolutionary organization to intervene where possible to give these outbursts political direction."
>
> —"Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom"

In line with this policy, at the time of the 1967 ghetto rebellion in Newark, New Jersey, we put out a very short agitational leaflet written by Jim Robertson, titled "Organize Black Power!" Incidentally, during the first years of our existence our name, Spartacist League, was obscure to most people, especially black ghetto youth. However, in 1967 Hollywood re-issued the film *Spartacus*, starring Kirk Douglas, about the great slave rebellion in the ancient Roman Empire. So when we distributed the leaflet, blacks would say, "You're the Kirk Douglas group, you guys kicked the butts of the Romans." And we'd reply, "Yeah, that's our historical tradition."

While the ghetto revolts were suppressed with murderous savagery by the police and National Guard, the ruling class also sought to dampen black unrest by offering certain reforms. Democratic president Lyndon Johnson declared a "war on poverty," that is, federally funded programs that were supposed to alleviate the horrific conditions of ghetto life. Busing black children into white neighborhoods was supposed to increase the level of school integration. Affirmative action for blacks in college admissions was supposed to increase racial integration in higher education.

Not only were these policies totally inadequate to improve the conditions of the black masses, but almost all were subsequently reversed by racist reaction. Busing, for example, was effectively killed in Boston in 1974 when white racist mobs attacked black school children. We actively intervened in the Boston busing crisis, agitating for mass, integrated labor-black defense guards to protect the black children in South Boston. We also called for low-rent, racially integrated public housing, for quality, integrated education for all, and for the implementation of busing and its extension to the suburbs as a minimal step toward black equality. However, the local Boston labor bureaucracy passively tolerated racist mob violence against black school children. (See "As Racist Mobs Rampaged, Liberals and Reformists Knifed Busing," *WV* No. 921, 26 September 2008.)

The Bankruptcy of Black Nationalism

But let's shift back in time to the mid-late 1960s and talk about what was called black nationalism. I say what was called black nationalism because it really wasn't. The central demand of Basque nationalists in Spain is for an independent Basque state. Likewise for Québécois nationalists in Canada. While some of the self-styled black nationalist groups included in their formal programs the call for an independent black state, that was not what they were really about. No one took that seriously. I and other comrades had many arguments with black nationalists at the time and they never focused on carving out an independent state from the existing U.S. These groups are more accurately described as pseudo-nationalists or separatists. What differentiated them from liberal black groups and from racially integrated leftist groups was that they were exclusively black and advocated exclusively black institutions—schools, government agencies, cops—within the framework of the existing American capitalist state.

Despite their radical and often white-baiting rhetoric, most of these black nationalists quickly re-entered the fold of mainstream bourgeois politics. They offered themselves to the white ruling class as overseers of the ghetto masses. They became administrators of the various poverty programs and members of the entourage of local black Democratic politicos. For example, well-known black nationalist and white-baiting poet Amiri Baraka became an aide to the black Democratic mayor of Newark, New Jersey, in the early 1970s. In that role he tried to break a strike by the racially integrated teachers union that, moreover, had a black leadership. The Black Panthers described such political operators as "pork-chop nationalists" and dashiki Democrats (dashikis being a garment worn by men in Africa).

So what about the Black Panther Party, which described itself as "revolutionary nationalist" and "Marxist-Leninist"? Formed in 1966, the Panthers consisted mainly of lumpenized ghetto youth led by a small number of young black leftist intellectuals. In fact, they had a doctrine of lumpen vanguardism. Initially the Panthers attempted to build a black paramilitary organization in the ghettos that would coexist with and restrain the police—sort of an armed version of "community control of the police." And for a short time they actually got away with it, especially here in Oakland, their original and strongest base.

But by 1968 the FBI and local police had launched an all-out campaign to destroy the Panthers. Thirty-eight Panther militants were killed outright and top leaders were imprisoned on capital charges. A few managed to flee the country and gain refuge, for example, in Algeria. The Panther leadership responded to the murderous repression by turning sharply to the right in an effort to gain liberal support for their legal defense. In 1970-71, the organization was effectively destroyed by a violent factional struggle.

As we later wrote about black nationalism in general, in all its diverse political expressions: "At bottom black nationalism is an expression of hopelessness stemming from defeat, reflecting despair over prospects for integrated class struggle and labor taking up the fight for black rights. The chief responsibility for this lies on the shoulders of the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, which has time and

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Milton Friedman—Braintruster of Bloody Pinochet Dictatorship

University of Chicago Honors Capitalist Pig, Again

We reprint below a Chicago Spartacus Youth Club leaflet as reissued February 7. The leaflet was distributed at a January 29 event featuring Naomi Klein at Loyola University as well as at the University of Chicago.

CHICAGO—After right-wing "free market" economist and longtime University of Chicago professor Milton Friedman dropped dead in 2006, it did not take long for the U of C administration to spark a minor firestorm on campus by proposing to name an economic research institute in his honor. In the 1970s Friedman and his "Chicago Boys" notoriously served as economic advisers to the bloody CIA-backed Chilean dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet that massacred 30,000 workers, peasants and leftists and imprisoned and tortured thousands more. Last year, in response to the U of C proposal to launch a Milton Friedman Institute, faculty formed the Committee for Open Research on Economy and Society (CORES), which initiated an online petition against the Institute and held a number of well-attended campus events. Over 100 professors signed a letter of protest to the administration, and the full Faculty Senate convened for the first time in a decade to debate the proposal.

It is truly an affront to working people and the oppressed around the planet that the University would attempt to honor the legacy of this man. It would be utopian to think that bourgeois universities would not name buildings in honor of sundry capitalist moguls and their academic mouthpieces. But Friedman was not simply a reactionary ideologue: his hands were *drenched in the blood of the Chilean masses*. In 1975, the *New York Times* accurately labeled him "the guiding light of the junta's economic policy" (21 September 1975). The CIA funded a 300-page Friedmanite blueprint given to the leaders of the junta in preparation for the coup. In March 1975 Friedman himself, accompanied by his U of C cohort Arnold Harberger, flew to Chile for high-level talks with the regime to outline the economic "shock treatment" that led to the mass starvation of those who had survived the initial phase of bloodletting.

After the 1973 Pinochet coup, our forebears in the Spartacus Youth League launched a campaign at U of C to drive Friedman and Harberger off campus through protest and exposure. In order to mobilize the broadest forces possible the SYL initiated the Committee Against Friedman-Harberger Collaboration with the Chilean Junta. Based on the slogans "Protest Friedman and Harberger: Collaborators with the Bloody Chilean Junta!" and "Free All Victims of the Junta's Repression!" the Committee held a teach-in on Chile and mobilized several demonstrations at U of C and other campuses that Friedman visited, drawing support from a variety of groups and individuals who opposed the Chilean junta.

In its opposition to the Friedman Institute today, CORES argues primarily on the basis of maintaining the University's "impartiality," complaining that the "naming [of] such a major institute after Friedman is a symbolic endorsement of his views by the University." The University was able to soften faculty opposition simply by "changing" the name from the "Milton Friedman Institute" to the "Milton Friedman Institute for Research in Economics" in order to "make clear that it is solely an economics research institute."

For Marxists, it is no contradiction that the U of C seeks to enshrine Friedman's bloody legacy. Under capitalism, universities are not simply institutions for research and higher learning, but serve fundamentally to preserve and promote the bourgeois order. Founded by oil baron John D. Rockefeller, U of C serves as a training ground for the next generation of capitalist politicians and bureaucrats, business managers, corporate lawyers, and other servants of the property-owning class. Its Board of Trustees is a den of investment bankers and Fortune 500 execs.

Reuters

Gerretsen/Gamma

Left: Chilean president Salvador Allende (at right) with Pinochet a month before 1973 military coup. Right: Troops round up leftists during coup in Santiago. Popular-front government disarmed combative proletariat, paved way for bloodbath.

As with its decades-long association with Friedman, the University brags about hosting the 1942 Manhattan Project experiments that led to the nuclear incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The U of C has long been a bulwark against the black population of the surrounding South Side ghettos, with a private army of campus cops riding roughshod over black residents as well as black students, such as grad student Clemmie Carthans, beaten by the cops after they saw him hugging a white female student (see "Protest Racist Cop Terror at the University of Chicago," *Workers Vanguard* No. 821, 5 March 2004).

The Spartacus Youth Clubs fight for the maximum access to academe and the broadest democratic rights within its groves, and we seek to obstruct the universities from being direct instruments of class rule and class discrimination. We call for the opening of the U of C to the surrounding black neighborhood as part of our fight for free, quality education for all. *Nationalize the University! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students!* For the universities to genuinely serve the interests of those who work and study there, *the campus administrations should be abolished*—for student, worker, teacher control! Ultimately, for the campuses to function as true communities of learning will require the overthrow of capitalism.

On October 1, rad-lib journalist Naomi Klein gave a well-attended lecture against the Friedman Institute plan, sponsored by CORES, along with Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and the Platypus group. Ever since her first book, *No Logo*, was published on the heels of the 1999 Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization, Klein has been a darling of the "anti-globalization" milieu. Her latest hook, *The Shock Doctrine* (2007), gives many examples of how the Friedmanite pauperization of the Chilean masses became a model for brutal anti-labor austerity policies in the past three decades. But at bottom Klein is a stone-cold liberal, who makes it abundantly clear that she has no fundamental objection to capitalism. For all her fight-the-Man posturing, Klein's bottom line at the U of C was to promote capitalist politician Barack Obama's campaign to be Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, absurdly claiming that the election posed a "referendum on Friedmanism." Since Obama's election, Klein has heaped praise on the "remarkable grassroots movement that carried him to victory," calling for this "movement" to keep up the pressure by "loudly holding Obama to his campaign promises, and letting the Democrats know that there will be consequences for betrayal" ("Real Change Depends on Stopping the Bailout Profiteers," *Huffington Post*, 4 November 2008).

Obama's election was a victory for the bourgeoisie, which hopes he will give a facelift to U.S. imperialism and carry out their interests more effectively than Bush did. All the capitalist parties—Democrat, Republican and Green—are enemies of working people and the oppressed. A comrade of the SYC intervened in the discussion against Klein's support to the bourgeois candidate Obama, making a splash that was reported in the campus paper. "Oddly, Klein's most outspoken critic fell to her left," wrote the *Chicago Maroon* (3 October 2008). "A student who said he was with 'a Trotskyist group on campus' shouted into the microphone that Klein 'completely let the Democrats off the hook' and called for 'a socialist revolution.' The comments drew cheers and jeers from the audience, including a shout of 'It doesn't work, buddy!'"

Indeed, what Klein, SDS and Platypus, along with the reformist left internationally, share in common is that they accept the bourgeois lie of the "death of communism." Viewing the Soviet Union as, at best, a failed experiment which proved that workers revolution "doesn't work," they are left with no choice but to fight for some form of repackaging the capitalist system. Klein is explicit in advocating a kinder, gentler capitalist welfare state:

> "It is eminently possible to have a market-based economy that requires no such brutality and demands no such ideological purity. A free market in consumer products can coexist with free public health care, with public schools, with a large

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Young Spartacus

1975 Chicago protest, part of Spartacus Youth League-initiated campaign against Milton Friedman and Arnold Harberger, advisers to bloody CIA-backed Pinochet dictatorship.

Obama...

(continued from page 2)

Revolution was of world-historic significance. The creation of a centrally planned, collectivized economy laid the basis for an enormous leap in social progress and China's advance from abject peasant backwardness. The revolution enabled women to advance by orders of magnitude over their previous miserable status. A nation that had been ravaged and divided by foreign powers for a century was unified and freed from imperialist subjugation.

Following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, the CCP regime, seeking to overcome the inefficiencies and distortions resulting from Mao's bureaucratic commandism and economic autarky, abandoned central planning and introduced a series of market-oriented "reforms" in the economy. These included attracting large-scale investment, concentrated in manufacturing, by Western and Japanese capitalists as well as offshore Chinese capitalists in Hong Kong and Taiwan. A sizable class of capitalist entrepreneurs has also emerged on the mainland. However, capitalists in China are still prevented from organizing themselves and vying for power. While many members of the CCP officialdom have financial interests and familial ties to private enterprises and capitalists, the political power of the Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy continues to be based primarily on the core sectors of the industrial economy, which remain collectivized, and on the state-owned banking system.

Alfred Eisenstaedt

British bourgeois economist John Maynard Keynes at Bretton Woods Conference, July 1944.

Smashing the Chinese workers state is a strategic goal for the capitalist powers, centrally the U.S. imperialists, who seek to turn China into a vast sphere of untrammeled exploitation. To that end, they are increasing military pressure on China while also pursuing a policy of internal economic and political subversion. This includes promoting anti-Communist dissidents in the name of "democracy" and "human rights."

We stand for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution, just as we stand for the military defense of the other remaining deformed workers states: Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam. Defense of the Chinese workers state is undermined by the rule of the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy, whose policies are encapsulated in the anti-Marxist dogma of "building socialism in one country" and "peaceful coexistence" with world imperialism. We call for a proletarian political revolution to oust the venal and oppressive CCP regime and replace it with a government based on democratically elected workers and peasants councils and committed to revolutionary internationalism.

The pressure of world imperialism on China is now intensifying not only through the effects of the global economic crisis but also the replacement of the Republican Bush by the Democrat Obama. The Democrats have generally pushed for a more aggressive line against China than the Republicans. During Senate confirmation hearings late last month, Obama's designated treasury secretary Tim Geithner accused China of "manipulating" its currency, the renminbi, in order to boost exports. This is a loaded code word used to justify trade protectionism. Interestingly, the CCP regime of Hu Jintao was one of the few governments in the world to publicly praise Bush when he left office.

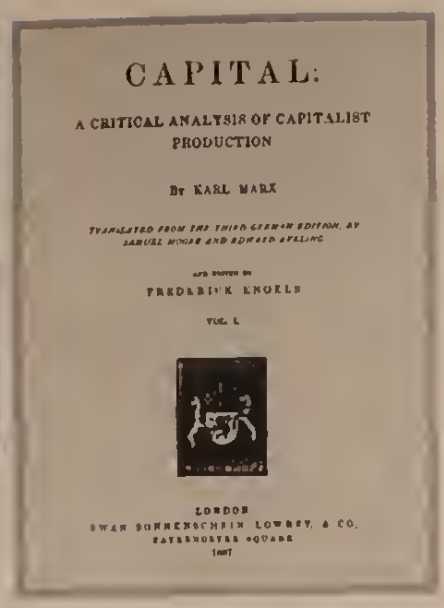
Unlike the major capitalist countries, China's economy—with its collectivized industrial core and state-owned banks—is actually continuing to grow, although at a much reduced pace. Nonetheless, the global capitalist crisis has had a disruptive and depressive effect on the economy, with potentially destabilizing political consequences. The divisions, fostered by the Stalinists' "market reforms," between the wealthy capitalists and bureaucratic elite on the one hand and the workers and peasants on the other, have intensified.

The Beijing authorities have long maintained that 8 percent is the minimum annual increase in gross domestic product (GDP) necessary to prevent unemployment from rising among both urban youth entering the labor market and migrants from the countryside seeking jobs in the cities. In the fourth quarter of 2008, the growth of GDP fell sharply to 6.8 percent. According to official figures, over 20 million migrant workers have been laid off, most of them from factories owned by foreign and offshore Chinese capitalists that produce consumer goods for First World markets. Additionally, the collapse of a housing boom has depressed construction activity, another major source of employment for migrant workers. A large part of the income of rural households is derived from remittances by family members working in the cities. So, many peasant families are now facing severe economic distress.

The Beijing Stalinist bureaucracy fears, and correctly so, increased labor strife and protests by workers and peasants. Zhang Xiaojing, a director of the Institute of Economics at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, sees troubled times: "There will be lots of laid-off migrant workers returning to the villages, not to mention the many college graduates and this will affect social stability" (London *Financial Times*, 21 December 2008). Likewise, Chen Jiping, deputy secretary of the CCP's central political and legislative affairs committee, warned in a magazine published by the official news agency: "Under the current situation, new social conflicts will be created nonstop."

In fact, there has already been a big upsurge of labor conflict, especially among migrant workers in the Pearl River delta, the main center of China's export industry. To dampen worker unrest the CCP regime has pursued a policy of offering to pay part of the unpaid wages of laid-off workers. But this tactic didn't work at the Jianrong Suitcase Factory in Dongguan. After the workers refused to accept an offer of 60 percent of their unpaid wages, they battled with riot police seeking to keep them locked in the factory compound. At another Dongguan factory, a protest over severance pay also led to a clash with the police, as angry workers tore through the building destroying computers and equipment.

John Mayall



Karl Marx's seminal work *Capital* explained boom-and-bust cycles, fundamental irrationality of capitalist system.

Facing a rising tide of labor conflict, the Beijing Stalinist regime is attempting to offset the depressive effect of the world capitalist downturn by expanding the state sector. The bureaucracy's aim is to maintain and increase employment and output. In contrast, the various stimulus plans in the U.S. and other advanced capitalist countries are an effort to jump-start investment by private capitalists, whose interest is not the expansion of production but the generation of profit.

In early November, the Beijing government announced a big stimulus package (equivalent to $585 billion) centered on investment in infrastructure—railways, roads, ports and the like. However, only one-quarter of the funds will be provided by the central government; the other three-quarters are supposed to come from provincial and local government bodies and the state-owned banks. These institutions have far more limited financial resources, so all of the additional money might not be forthcoming. Last week, Premier Wen Jiabao indicated the possibility of additional stimulus measures. The government has also told managers of state-owned enterprises not to lay off workers or cut back planned capital investment. Vice-Premier Zhang Dejiang called on "state-owned enterprises to further expand domestic and international markets ...assume the responsibility and continue playing the leading role" in the economy (*Financial Times*, 27-28 December 2008).

In the short term, economic conditions in China will depend on the extent to which the expansion of the state sector offsets the contraction of the private sector. In this regard, the London *Economist* (24 January) cited a financial analyst, Chris Wood, who argues that "the effectiveness of the stimulus hinges on the extent to which China is now a capitalist economy. The more 'capitalist' it is, the deeper the downturn now; the more it is still a command economy, the better chances of recovery in 2009."

The restoration of capitalism in China will not be determined by the quantitative extension of the private economic sector relative to the state sector. As in the former Soviet Union and East European deformed workers states, the decisive arena in which the restorationist forces would have to triumph is at the political level, through the conquest of state power. At some point, likely when the bourgeois elements in and around the bureaucracy move to eliminate CCP political power, the explosive social tensions building up in Chinese society will shatter the political structure of the ruling bureaucratic caste. When that happens, China's fate will be starkly posed. Either the workers will sweep away the parasitic ruling elite through a proletarian political revolution that defends and extends the gains of the 1949 Revolution and makes China a bastion in the struggle for world socialism, or capitalist counterrevolution will triumph, bringing back devastating imperialist subjugation and exploitation.

Reuters

January 29: Workers demonstrate in Strasbourg, France, during nationwide one-day general strike. Union banner demands, "Workers Must Not Pay for the Crisis."

The $700 Billion and More Bank Bailout Scam

In the past few weeks, popular outrage over the bank bailout scheme that began last fall under the outgoing Bush administration with the support of Obama and the Congressional Democrats has focused on the exorbitant bonuses given to Wall Street executives. John Thain, the former head of Merrill Lynch, in particular has become a poster boy for the unbridled greed of Wall Street bankers. In early December, Thain pushed through $3-$4 billion in executive bonuses a month or so ahead of schedule, just before the firm was taken over by Bank of America. Both Merrill and Bank of America had gotten their share of the bailout booty and were then asking for more. It was also revealed that Thain had earlier spent $1.2 million remodeling his office, including $35,000 for an antique commode. Overall, the moguls of Wall Street gave themselves $18.4 billion in bonuses last year—the sixth-largest amount of such largesse on record—while also managing to lose a trillion dollars or so of their investors' money. Obama found it opportune to indulge in pseudo-populist rhetoric, describing the bonuses as "shameful."

The political effect of the current focus on the personal greed of Wall Street bankers—greedy though they certainly are—is to *divert* attention from the *destructive irrationality* of capitalism as an economic system. Even if all financial executives were willing to work for free and were philanthropically minded, the government bailout would still be a gigantic financial swindle of American working people. This money will not be lent to businesses to maintain, much less expand, employment and output. And it will certainly *not* be lent to families facing foreclosure and eviction from their homes.

Reportedly, Obama and his economic chieftains are planning another bailout scheme centered on buying up "toxic" loans from the banks and then warehousing them in a government-owned "aggregator" bank. Eventually, the government will supposedly recoup some of the money

as the loans are repaid when economic conditions improve.

For starters, the discussion and debate over the price the government should pay for the "toxic" loans—whether 70 or 50 or 30 cents on the dollar—is meaningless. The future market value of a given mortgage-backed security, for example, will depend on the proportion of the loans embodied in it that default as the downturn continues to accelerate. Michael G. Thompson, a director of a division of Standard & Poor's that evaluates "troubled securities," exclaimed: "We are not masters of the universe who can predict the macroeconomic environment" (*New York Times*, 2 February). In his own way, Thompson recognizes that capitalists—even the wealthiest and most powerful—cannot control what Marxists call "the anarchy of the market."

For the same reason, the notion of a "good" bank loan under present economic conditions is also meaningless. Many companies that were profitable enough to meet their debt amortization schedule when they first took out these loans are now losing money and will lose a lot more in the next year or so. Likewise, many households which had enough income to make their monthly mortgage payments have since had family members who have been laid off, reduced to part-time work or had their wage rates cut.

Bank executives are fearful that additional loans will become additional losses. Through the massive sell-off of financial stocks (Bank of America's share price, for example, has fallen *70 percent* since October), capitalist investors are forcing bank executives to rebuild their capital base however they can, including by reducing their outstanding loan volume. So any government bailout money is going to be hoarded, used to pay down the bank's own debt or to take over weaker, failing competitors. Krishna Guha, who

AP

Workers protest closing of toy factory in Guangdong province, China, October 2008. Slowing economic growth in Chinese deformed workers state has increased unemployment, exacerbated social tensions.

Dholakia/Detroit News

UAW workers picket shareholders meeting in Hamtramck, Michigan, during American Axle strike against layoffs, April 2008.

covers the U.S. economy for the London *Financial Times* (3 February) explained:

> "It would be bold to assume that even removing toxic assets and injecting capital will result in increased lending.... Banks are constrained by the need to hoard capital not so much to avoid breaching regulatory capital standards (not yet, anyway) but in order to meet much tougher conditions now imposed by the market."

There are two sides to the current so-called "credit crisis." One is the unwillingness of banks to lend; the other is the lack of willing borrowers with the financial capacity to repay. What corporation is going to borrow money to expand its operations in what increasingly looks like the early stages of a new world depression? In many cases, the firms most eager, even desperate, for additional credit are those facing imminent bankruptcy. The same economic logic operates in the household sector. Affluent petty-bourgeois families are now reducing their debts and saving money for the proverbial rainy day, while families facing mortgage foreclosure are for banks the most "toxic" of would-be borrowers.

It's useful to look at what happened in Japan during its prolonged recession/stagnation of the 1990s. In 1990, the collapse of a stock market and real estate bubble wiped out much of the paper wealth—equivalent to three years of the country's national output—of Japanese corporations. At the same time, their volume of outstanding bank loans remained unchanged. Many Japanese companies were thus technically insolvent, with their assets less than their liabilities. So they used any net cash flow (income minus expenses) to pay down their debt, instead of reinvesting it, much less borrowing more, to expand production.

A number of American bourgeois economists and financial capitalists (e.g., Stephen Roach, chairman of Morgan Stanley Asia) have pointed to the parallels between the U.S. today and the post-bubble Japan of the early 1990s. Liberal economist Paul Krugman has written: "Japan experienced a 'lost decade' of deflation and stagnation in the 1990s—and the only thing that let Japan escape from its trap was a global boom that boosted the nation's exports. Who will rescue America from a similar trap now that the whole world is slumping at the same time?" (*New York Times*, 6 February).

To Krugman's rhetorical question, we Marxists have an answer: a proletarian socialist revolution will take the means of production and exchange from the capitalists and establish a planned, collectivized economy based on *production for use, not for profit*.

The Dollar and the Global Capitalist Crisis

Only months ago, the dominant school of bourgeois economics was monetarism, the idea that government can effectively control economic activity by adjusting the amount of money in the banking system along with interest rates. In the U.S., interest rates have been driven nearly to zero; the government has injected hundreds of billions of dollars into banks by buying their shares and has provided several trillion dollars in temporary loans and guarantees—with almost no perceptible impact. Bourgeois economists now put their money on Keynesian policies like deficit spending to prime the economy. But Keynesian schemes, no less than monetarist ones, run up against the contradictions of the capitalist system.

Many economists have long feared that the U.S. economy could founder on the shoals of foreign borrowing. Since the 1960s, the U.S. has run balance of payments deficits, importing more than it exports. The difference has been financed by borrowing, mainly from foreign governments. Since 1992, the U.S. has been —to an increasing degree—a net borrower from the rest of the world. Today, U.S. public and private debt is more than 3.5 times the country's GDP, by far the highest level in U.S. history. (The previous peak of three times GDP was reached in 1933 during the Great Depression.)

How much more can the U.S. government borrow before its creditors conclude that Washington is so overburdened with debt that it is no longer a reliable client? Most Keynesian economists—and the Obama administration—apparently think the answer to that question is: More, much more. They point to the fact that U.S. Treasuries continue to be seen as a "risk-free" investment, allowing the U.S. government to borrow at almost zero interest, while countries like Italy and Spain are paying high interest rates to finance their bailout plans. Likewise, as the economic crisis spread internationally, the dollar was actually strengthened as investors liquidated investments abroad and repatriated dollars to the U.S.

More fundamentally, the dollar continues to be the major reserve currency throughout the capitalist world and also for China. Foreign capitalist powers and the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy are inhibited from a major sell-off of dollars because this would lead to a rapid devaluation of their own financial reserves. Nonetheless, what was an unstable situation before the current crisis has become much more so.

Mainstream bourgeois economists admit that sooner or later the U.S. debt explosion must come to an end. The question is: How will that reversal be financed when the U.S. is, as *Financial Times* columnist Martin Wolf put it in a January 14 column, "both a deficit and a debtor country"? Wolf wrote that Obama speaks "as if a large fiscal stimulus would be enough to restore prosperity. If that is what he believes, Mr Obama is in for a shock. The difficulties he confronts are much deeper and more global than that.... The likely longevity and scale of the needed fiscal deficits are quite scary."

The nightmare scenario, invoked by not a few economists these days, is a potential run on the dollar. If one of the various countries holding immense dollar reserves were to rapidly diversify out of dollars—for example, in response to a diplomatic or military crisis—it would drive down the value of other countries' holdings, potentially touching off spiraling sales of dollars. The impact on the U.S. economy would be skyrocketing prices of imported goods, a freezing up of economic activity and a sharp fall in the standard of living of everyone except the most well-to-do. Harvard economist Jeffrey Frankel invoked the danger in 2007 as the current financial crisis first hit:

> "The Chinese and the Japanese, the two biggest holders [of dollar reserves], are kind of at odds. And then you throw in Saudi Arabia and a whole diversity of countries that have nothing in particular in common, and you could argue that, even if they all got together and came to an agreement not to sell dollars, there would still be a huge temptation at some point to defect. But they are not even *trying* to agree. That says to me that at some point, somebody is going to start selling."
>
> —"Debtor Nation," *Harvard Magazine* (July-August 2007)

The destructive irrationality of the capitalist system is highlighted by the boom-and-bust cycle. In a 1921 speech to the Third Congress of the Communist International, revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky declared:

> "So long as capitalism is not overthrown by the proletarian revolution, it will continue to live in cycles, swinging up and down. Crises and booms were inherent in capitalism at its very birth; they will accompany it to its grave....
>
> "It might be asked whether the great struggles over wages...will lead automatically to the world revolution, to the final civil war and the struggle for the conquest of political power. However, it is not Marxist to pose the question in such a way. We have no automatic guarantees of development."
>
> —"Report on the World Economic Crisis and the New Tasks of the Communist International," *The First Five Years of the Communist International*, Vol. 1

Indeed, the victory of socialist revolution requires the instrumentality of a revolutionary party that, in the course of sharp class struggle, patiently educates the working class in the understanding not only of its social power but of its historic task as the gravedigger of capitalism. We fight for a revolutionary workers party, part of a Leninist-Trotskyist international dedicated to the task of fighting for socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist order worldwide. This will lay the basis for a rationally planned international economy based on production for need, not for profit. Only then will productive forces be developed such that poverty, scarcity and want will be eliminated, laying the basis for the creation of an egalitarian socialist society. ■

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Britain...

(continued from page 3)

But the Socialist Party, whose supporters were a key part of the strike leadership and which proposed the demands adopted by the strike committee, was up to its neck in this shameful campaign. The strike demands, while paying lip service for "All immigrant labour to be unionised," do not defend job rights for foreign workers. They include the demand for "Union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled union members, with nominating rights as work becomes available." In other words, jobs would be filled from "local" (i.e., ***British***) applicants. This is a version of "British jobs for British workers." In contrast to a Leninist vanguard party that fights against all manner of chauvinism, the Socialist Party is mired in it.

As part of the fight for a class-struggle leadership, the trade unions must oppose the "war on terror" and racism against immigrants and minorities. We oppose all the bourgeoisie's anti-immigrant laws and regulations, including work restrictions on workers from EU countries in East Europe. We demand: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! A class-struggle leadership in the unions would demand jobs for all, through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay, and undertake a union organising drive to draw into their ranks all workers, including those in dangerous and low-paid jobs.

Workers of the World Unite!

In the face of world capitalist recession, protectionism is increasing. Thus Barack Obama included a "buy American" clause in his "rescue" package for American industry. For the bourgeoisie, "free trade" and protectionism are options they can debate, but for the proletariat, protectionism is poison. It is a classic means of channelling discontent over job losses into hostility towards foreign workers and immigrants while building illusions in the benevolence of our "own" capitalists. The global economic crisis has exacerbated tensions between capitalist governments within the EU who are jostling to "save" their own economy. The EU directive that allows contractors operating in other countries not to hire local workers has fuelled opposition to the EU among construction workers. Contrary to the trade-union bureaucracy's pledge that EU laws can be amended to serve the interests of workers, levelling down of wages and conditions for workers is part of the purpose of the EU. As revolutionary, proletarian internationalists, we oppose the EU, an imperialist consortium designed to improve their competitiveness against their American and Japanese rivals, at the expense of the working class in Europe, including its minority component. Our programme is for workers revolutions leading to a Socialist United States of Europe.

Our programme is completely counterposed to "little England" nationalist opposition to the EU that is associated with old Labour reformism, to which the SWP, Workers Power and the Taaffeites are all wedded. Old Labour's erstwhile claim to "socialism," as upheld by former miners leader Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn—a commitment to nationalised industry under capitalism—is inherently protectionist. The extensive nationalisations of industry carried out under Clement Attlee's Labour government in the postwar period had nothing to do with socialism; rather they were a "rescue package" for British industry which was in profound decline against its rivals.

The further expansion of the EU imperialist trade bloc into the former deformed workers states of East Europe provided the European bourgeoisies with a vast supply of very cheap skilled labour. This expansion was made possible by the series of capitalist counterrevolutions that swept across East Europe and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1992 creating massive unemployment and social immiseration. This historic defeat for the workers and oppressed was supported by the Socialist Party, SWP, Workers Power and sundry other reformists. In contrast, we Trotskyists of the International Communist League fought to mobilise the working class in defence of the gains that those states embodied.

Protectionism is doubly pernicious when directed at the People's Republic of China, where Britain, the U.S., and other imperialist powers have had as a central goal the restoration of capitalist rule. The fact that capitalism was overthrown in China by the 1949 Revolution, leading to the building of a collectivised economy, represents a historic gain for the working class internationally. We continue to fight for the unconditional military defence of China against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, and for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it with the rule of workers and peasants councils.

The workers movement has seen many examples of trade-union solidarity against the capitalists' attempts to use low-wage immigrant workers as a club against the unions. In Dublin in 2005, workers throughout Ireland demonstrated against Irish Ferries—and in solidarity with immigrant workers—when the bosses tried to hire East European workers at a fraction of Irish workers' wages. Our comrades issued a leaflet calling for the power of the working class to be harnessed behind defence of immigrants, declaring: "Unions must organise immigrant workers! Full wages and benefits for immigrants!" Another example was the Heathrow strike in 2005 when, in response to the sacking of low-paid catering workers and replacing them with immigrants at even lower wages (which did *not* happen in the construction sites at power stations), the workforce at British Airways staged an immensely powerful wildcat strike that crippled BA's international operation. But the trade-union leadership under Tony Woodley snatched defeat from the jaws of victory by ending the strike without having obtained the reinstatement of the sacked workers.

As far back as 1866, under Karl Marx, the International Working Men's Association prevented an attempt by London master tailors, who were big capitalists, to replace journeymen tailors in London by recruiting journeymen in France, Belgium and Switzerland. Marx wrote that the secretaries of the International "published in Belgian, French and Swiss newspapers a warning which was a complete success. The London masters' manoeuvre was foiled; they had to surrender and meet their workers' just demands" ("A Warning," 4 May 1866).

There is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialised economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problem of poverty, scarcity and want. We seek to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, forged in opposition to Labourism, to overthrow the bloodsoaked British capitalist order and replace it with working-class rule. Down with the reactionary "United Kingdom"! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!■

Friedman...

(continued from page 7)

> segment of the economy—like a national oil company—held in state hands. It's equally possible to require corporations to pay decent wages, to respect the right of workers to form unions, and for governments to tax and redistribute wealth so that the sharp inequalities that mark the corporatist state are reduced."

Klein's vision of the capitalist economy without violence is sheer fantasy! Without the exploitation of labor, there simply is no capitalist profit. This leads to continuous attacks on the working class to drive down wages and benefits, while speeding up work hours. Backing up the bourgeoisie is the capitalist state, which is a system of violence—armed bodies of men such as the army, cops, courts and prisons—that exists to protect the bosses' profits and defend their rule. There is no way to get rid of the war, oppression and exploitation that are endemic to the capitalist profit system without overturning capitalist property, smashing the capitalist state and establishing workers rule. Short of socialist revolution, any gains won by the working class in the form of higher wages or social benefits are reversible. Oil companies have been nationalized and *de*-nationalized repeatedly within the framework of the bourgeois state. The bosses wage constant war to reverse gains won through social struggle, from busting unions to massively curtailing welfare programs to attacks on abortion rights.

Klein (like many liberals) hopes Obama will revive the policies of John Maynard Keynes, the liberal bourgeois economist who proposed massive government spending to save the capitalist system during the Great Depression. But in fact what ended the economic crisis of the 1930s was not New Deal social spending but the much greater infusion of government funds during World War II, a point that Keynes acknowledged in 1940: "It is, it seems, politically impossible for a capitalistic democracy to organize expenditure on the scale necessary to make the grand experiment which would prove my case—***except in war conditions***" [our emphasis]. So much for a capitalist welfare state without violence!

Rejecting a revolutionary working-class perspective, Klein and SDS promote a host of non-proletarian forces to apply pressure for more crumbs off the capitalist table, ranging from the petty-bourgeois Zapatistas in Mexico to the Democrats in Washington (see "SDS Old & New: From Tepid Liberalism to Radicalism and Back Again," *WV* No. 927, 2 January). Predictably, in describing Friedman's role in Chile, Klein enthuses that Socialist Party leader Salvador Allende, the Chilean president murdered during Pinochet's coup, was "a new breed of Latin American revolutionary" who "believed that socialist change in Chile needed to come through the ballot box, not the barrel of a gun." In reality, Allende's Unidad Popular regime was a classic example of a popular-front government, a bloc of working-class parties (such as Allende's Socialist Party) with a mythical "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie, where the political program of the working-class component is subordinated to that of the bourgeoisie and defense of capitalist property relations. Uniquely on the left, following the Unidad Popular's election in 1970, we called for workers and leftists to "irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence on it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready" (see "Popular Front Paved Way for Pinochet Terror," *WV* No. 883, 5 January 2007).

Allende came to power in Chile amidst an upsurge of working-class strikes and peasant land seizures. While Allende preached that he would lead Chile on a "peaceful" (i.e., parliamentary) road to socialism, his regime was a capitalist government that used the bourgeois armed forces to contain the proletariat. It was the Allende government that promoted Pinochet as head of the army, and simultaneously Allende vowed to outlaw workers militias, undermining any defense against the generals. Allende was not simply the martyred victim of the Chilean generals and the CIA that Klein portrays; as we had warned would happen, his class-collaborationist policies led the Chilean working class directly into the jaws of crushing defeat.

If Klein and SDS seek to pressure the capitalists for a few more crumbs, the Platypus group—whose defining position is its support to the U.S. neocolonial occupation of Iraq—doesn't even want the crumbs! In response to Klein (and to the SYC), this pseudo-Marxist, academic talk shop grotesquely lauds Friedman for his "***critique*** and opposition to what he called the 'tyranny of the status quo'," arguing that it is "not very useful, to try to prosecute Friedman by reference, for instance, to Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile." Even Klein's proposal to nationalize the oil companies gives these "Marxian" grad students the willies: "such a wave of nationalizations would lay the ground very well, and very quickly, for future wars and other forms of social destruction, at the great expense of the freedom-potential a more liberal and cosmopolitan capitalism makes possible." The "freedom" that Platypus jumps up to defend is the capitalists' freedom to pillage and plunder, as the bloody "shock treatment" of Pinochet's regime graphically illustrates.

In responding to Klein, who rails that the left must account for "totalitarian Communism," our SYC comrade stated that we Trotskyists have nothing to apologize for, and fight for new October Revolutions on the model of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. As the first and only successful workers revolution in history, the Russian Revolution serves as a model for all those who would seek to end capitalist oppression once and for all. Despite its Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration in the 1920s, the Soviet workers state showed how collectivized property forms and centralized planning can massively increase productivity, while also serving as a bulwark against imperialist depredations around the globe. As part of our fight for world socialist revolution, we fought to the end to defend the Soviet Union, as we do the remaining deformed workers states today—China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam. We also fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucrats and institute workers democracy. Above all, we seek to win students and radical youth to the perspective of building a revolutionary workers party that can fight to overthrow capitalism here in the belly of the U.S. imperialist beast. ***Join us in this struggle!***■

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Black Freedom...

(continued from page 6)

again refused to mobilize the social power of the multiracial working class in struggle against racist discrimination and terror" (Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S., November 2000).

At the same time, the failure of the labor bureaucracy to improve the condition of the working class in general and to expand the scope of union power in the labor force as a whole conditioned what was called the "white backlash" in the mid-late 1960s. This was a widespread racist reaction against the black movement and minimal reforms like busing and affirmative action. Right-wing demagogues appealed with some success to the economic discontents and insecurities of white working-class as well as petty-bourgeois families. They said that the gains made by blacks, which they enormously exaggerated, had come at the expense of white working people, that their tax money was going to support black welfare mothers and "poverty hustlers," that their children did not gain admission to the better colleges because colleges were giving preference to blacks.

The "white backlash" deepened the racial divisions and antagonisms within the working class, including in its unionized sector. And this helped set the stage for the effective union-busting offensive launched by the ruling class beginning in the late 1970s. The basic point is that labor and blacks go forward together or they will be driven back separately.

So what about today? First, it's important to recognize that as a result of large-scale immigration from Latin America in recent decades the ethnic composition of the U.S. working class has significantly changed since the 1960s and '70s. We are a small revolutionary Marxist propaganda group. As such we don't have the capacity to lead the kind of labor, anti-racist and immigrant rights struggles that will raise the political consciousness of large numbers of workers whether white, black, Latino, native-born or immigrant. What we can and must do is develop a multiracial and multiethnic cadre that can lead such struggles in the future. And here I want to emphasize the importance of a multiethnic cadre. Racial and ethnic divisions cannot be fully and permanently overcome among the broad mass of workers under capitalism. At times of direct struggle, such as during strikes against the employers and government, these divisions are in one sense overcome. But then they subsequently reappear and are exploited and aggravated by bourgeois politicians. Look at the recent Democratic primaries where the overwhelming majority of blacks voted for Obama and most Latinos for Hillary Clinton.

Black communists will generally speak with greater political authority to black workers, and Latino communists to Latino workers. We need all kinds in the party. The unity of the working class in an all-sided and durable sense can exist only at the highest level of political consciousness organizationally embodied in a revolutionary vanguard party. And that's what we seek to create.■

Sri Lanka...

(continued from page 12)

Sri Lanka's central highlands. The ancestors of this deeply exploited population were brought in by the British as indentured laborers starting in the 19th century.

At the time of the 1983 pogroms, our comrades initiated and joined protests in cities around the world against the massacre. Noting that the bloodbath had "catastrophically altered for the foreseeable future the prospects for common class struggle between the Sinhalese working class and the oppressed Tamil minority," we raised the call for the ***right of Tamil Eelam***—a separate Tamil state in the North—and for a federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka as part of a socialist federation of South Asia.

In the 25 years of civil war that followed, at least 70,000 civilians have been killed and hundreds of thousands of Tamils driven into exile or squalid refugee camps. The LTTE managed to compact a Tamil mini-state in parts of the North and East and eventually signed a cease-fire agreement with the Colombo government in 2002. But the Sinhalese-chauvinist army's provocations never stopped. After the 2005 election of hard-line SLFP president Mahinda Rajapaksa, who ruled out even autonomy for Tamil regions, the government abrogated the cease-fire and then withdrew from it entirely early last year.

While its troops massacre Tamils in the North, in the South the government has cracked down on civil liberties. Tamils living in Colombo have been ordered to register with the police, and hundreds have been expelled from the city. Journalists critical of the government have been killed. On January 8, Lasantha Wickrematunge, editor of the *Sunday Leader*, was gunned down by armed men on motorcycles as he drove to work. The murdered journalist, who was harshly critical of the government's conduct of the anti-Tamil war, had received a threatening call from President Rajapaksa warning that he would be killed if he continued to speak out.

Imperialist Green Light for Army Terror

The calls for the Tamil protests in Canada and Britain have featured appeals to Western imperialist governments to come to the aid of the Tamils. A protest call in Toronto, for example, called for pressure to be put on the Canadian government to "intervene immediately to stop the war." There should be no illusions that the governments in Ottawa, London, Washington or other imperialist centers will act for the liberation of the Tamil people. In fact, the imperialist powers have overwhelmingly supported the regime's murderous anti-Tamil offensive. Over the past 12 years, first the U.S. and then Britain, Canada and the European Union have declared the LTTE a "terrorist" organization, effectively giving the Lankan regime a green light for its attacks. The workers movement in the imperialist centers must oppose the anti-terror witchhunt, which has seen Tamil organizations banned, their offices raided and individuals railroaded to prison (see "Protest Ottawa's Ban on Tamil Tigers!" *Spartacist Canada* No. 149, Summer 2006).

U.S. imperialism in particular has given clear backing to the Rajapaksa government. On January 6, the American ambassador in Colombo issued a statement welcoming the fall of the Tigers' administrative capital, Kilinochchi, to the Lankan army and affirming that the U.S. "does not advocate that the Government of Sri Lanka negotiate with the LTTE" (*Asian Tribune*, 9 January). Soon after, a high-level delegation from the U.S. Pacific Fleet Command arrived for "discussions" with the heads of the Lankan security forces (Indo-Asian News Service, 21 January). Only after the army drove the LTTE from its final urban bases in early February did the U.S. and Britain call for a "temporary no-fire" agreement (*International Herald Tribune*, 4 February).

Washington's central strategic goal on the island is a stable regime that can

Adapted from New York Times, Washington Post

provide access to the strategic deep-water harbor of Trincomalee in the long-contested Eastern Province. Successive Sri Lankan governments have engaged in brutal "ethnic cleansing" in the area. Hundreds of thousands of Tamils have been forced to leave, either into exile abroad or to relatively safer areas of the island. Those who remain live under a state of siege. A rare eyewitness report by a North American journalist, Stephanie Nolen of the Toronto *Globe and Mail* (27 January), paints a chilling picture of the army occupation in her article, "How Can People Say This Is Peace?":

> "Ninety-eight people were abducted in this area last year, snatched off the streets by the infamous white vans with no licence plates that are used by government security agencies. Eighty-five other Tamils simply disappeared....
>
> "The streets of Trincomalee, banded every 150 metres or so with checkpoints where Tamils are grilled about who they are and where they are going and whether they can prove they do not support the LTTE, offer a grim vision of what the north will soon be like."

Nolen describes the government's stepped-up "Sinhalization" campaign: "Historic sites commemorating ancient Tamil kingdoms have, in the months since the government took control of the area, suddenly become memorials to Sinhalese kingdoms. Some Tamils stopped at checkpoints can no longer give the names of their home villages, because those places have new Sinhala names."

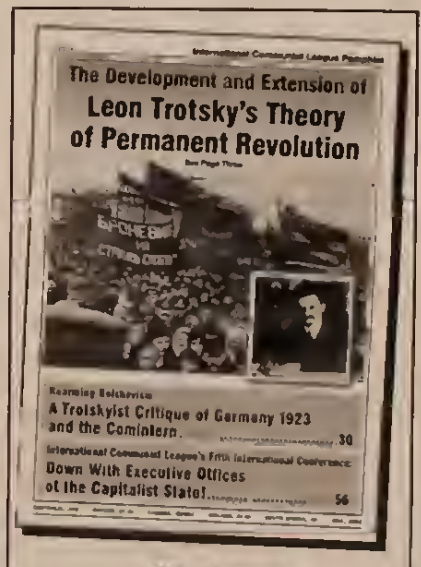
Toward a Socialist Federation of South Asia

While the Tigers appear to have suffered a decisive military setback, this by no means equals the end of the Lankan conflict. The communal divisions fostered by the regime are too deep, the dispossession and violence against the Tamils too profound, to offer a prospect of a lasting peace between the peoples.

As Marxists, we continue to denounce Sinhalese chauvinism and defend the rights of the Tamil people, including their right to a separate state. But the hard fact is that the eradication of national oppression and true social progress for the peoples of Lanka and the region will come only when barbaric capitalist rule and the divisions inherited from imperialist domination are overturned through socialist revolution. It is crucial that the most advanced pro-working-class elements, Tamil and Sinhalese alike, draw the lessons of the present desperate pass. This includes drawing the lessons of the betrayals of the once-Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), which abandoned the interests of the proletariat and the defense of the Tamil people when it entered the chauvinist SLFP government in 1964.

Above all, it is necessary to fight for class independence from all wings of the exploiters and for an internationalist perspective, looking in the first instance to the powerful and growing working class across the Palk Strait in India. What we wrote in *Spartacist* in the wake of the anti-Tamil pogroms 26 years ago remains true today:

> "Today Ceylon experiences the bitter fruit of decades of betrayal and defeat in the class struggle. The early LSSP tradition of defense of the Tamil masses was destroyed by the popular-frontist accommodation of the Sinhalese 'left' to the communalist SLFP; today these parties are anathema to the Tamil liberation fighters. It is necessary to begin again in the light of all experience since the British departed....
>
> "What is desperately needed is to further the building of a Trotskyist party in Sri Lanka, necessarily substantially based among the exploited Tamil masses. The struggle for the national rights of the Tamil people is vital to forging such a party. Lasting national and class justice for the Tamil working people will be secured through permanent revolution—rule by the workers and peasants—and a socialist federation of South Asia."■



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WORKERS VANGUARD

Defend the Tamil People!

Army Bloodbath in Sri Lanka

The following article was written by our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste of Canada, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

FEBRUARY 5—Many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Tamil civilians have been killed in a murderous offensive by the Sri Lankan army, whose aim is the destruction of the Tamil mini-state in the North and East of the Indian Ocean island. At least 30 people were killed on January 22 when troops bombed a makeshift health center in Vallipunam, a village the government had declared to be in a "safe zone." The last functioning hospital in the area came under fire in early February, killing at least 12 and forcing its evacuation.

The army has driven the nationalist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which has been fighting for an independent Tamil state for the last three decades, out of the northern Jaffna Peninsula and from its last urban bases. Besieged by 50,000 soldiers backed by fighter jets and helicopter gunships, at least a quarter million Tamil civilians are trapped in a small area of the northeastern jungle, without access to shelter, clean water or food. The government has banned relief agencies and the media from the war zone and even threatened to expel reporters from CNN, Al Jazeera and the BBC from the country for airing video clips of the devastation.

The working class internationally must protest the murderous onslaught by the Sri Lankan government and army! Around the world, tens of thousands of Tamils have taken to the streets in protest. Fifty thousand protested in Toronto on January 30, filling downtown streets for five hours on a weekday afternoon. Another 50,000 marched in London the next day. The government of India's Tamil Nadu state ordered the closure of all colleges and student hostels to prevent a threatened student strike in support of Lankan Tamils.

The Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste of Canada has joined protests against the massacre, distributing literature in solidarity with the besieged Tamils and putting forward our proletarian-revolutionary perspective for national and social liberation. We have long upheld the right of self-determination for the Tamil people—i.e., their right to form an independent state in the largely Tamil North and East. We stand for the military defense of the LTTE against the army assault and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Lankan army from the area.

At the same time, we give no political support to the LTTE—bourgeois nationalists who, carrying out the logic of nationalism, have staged their own inter-ethnic attacks on Sinhalese villagers and expelled Muslims from the historic Tamil city of Jaffna, the capital of the northern region, while employing murderous violence against other Tamil nationalist groups. Our perspective is the fight for Marxist workers parties throughout the region that can unite the working people and oppressed in the struggle for workers revolutions in Lanka and throughout South Asia. That is the only road to liberation from the poverty, oppression and national chauvinism that are endemic to capitalist rule and visited with particular brutality on the masses of imperialism's neocolonies.

Reuters

January 12: Grieving relatives in Vavuniya, Sri Lanka, bury Tamil civilians killed during government assault against Tamil Tigers.

Roots of Sinhalese-Chauvinist Terror

The roots of the decades-long Tamil insurgency lie in systematic discrimination against the Tamil people by successive Sri Lankan governments following independence from British colonial rule in 1948. As part of its racist divide-and-rule strategy, Britain had brought elements from the largely Hindu Tamil minority into the administration of its colony, then known as Ceylon. The post-independence regime, based on the Buddhist Sinhalese majority, began to displace Tamils from government service and access to higher education. Especially with the passage of a Sinhala-only language law under the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) government in 1956, the national chauvinism of the Sinhalese ruling class led to growing communal polarization.

The grisly climax came in 1983 with government-inspired pogroms against the Tamils, many thousands of whom were murdered in wholesale massacres. Tamil homes and businesses in the capital, Colombo, were burnt to the ground, often with the occupants inside. Following the 1983 pogroms, orchestrated under president J. R. Jayewardene of the United National Party, we wrote:

> "The massive atrocity taking place in Sri Lanka marks a watershed in that island's history. The bloodletting and the mass population transfers have set the economy back at least a decade and are forcing the separation of the peoples. J.R. has ripped the country apart, massacring many thousands and forcing the survivors into a virtual 'bantustan' in the barren North."
>
> —"Massacre in Sri Lanka," *Spartacist* (English edition) No. 35 (Autumn 1983)

The previous economic and geographic interpenetration of the two peoples was largely severed in blood, and Tamils were increasingly compacted in the North and the East, which, while largely Tamil, had historically been a region of mixed populations, including a substantial Muslim component. The dire situation of the Lankan Tamil people today is testimony to the reactionary logic of nationalism: under capitalism, when two peoples are interpenetrated within the same territory, the national rights of one people can only be expressed at the expense of the other people. Only the overthrow of capitalism through workers revolution can lay the basis for the equitable resolution of the conflicting national claims of the peoples of Sri Lanka.

Sinhalese chauvinism, designed and instigated by the Lankan ruling class, has been wielded to assert domination over both the Tamil and Sinhalese workers and oppressed, to head off any popular revolt by preventing working-class unity. For their part, the LTTE and other Tamil nationalists have long dismissed the struggles of the strategically placed "Indian Tamil" tea plantation workers in

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AFP

London, January 31: Tens of thousands gather to protest slaughter of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 931 — GCU C-701 — 27 February 2009

Down With Occupations of Afghanistan, Iraq!
U.S. Out of Pakistan, Central Asia!

Obama Escalates War in Afghanistan

True to his campaign promise to step up the U.S./NATO war in Afghanistan, President Barack Obama announced on February 17 that he was reinforcing the U.S. occupation force with an additional 17,000 troops. This will add nearly 50 percent to the 36,000 U.S. troops that, along with a non-U.S. NATO contingent of 32,000, are currently ravaging that country. Meanwhile, since taking over as Commander-in-Chief, Obama has ordered at least four separate bombing attacks on Pakistani villages by remotely piloted drones, killing over 50 people.

U.S. air attacks in Pakistan—often with the approval of the Pakistani military-backed regime—have inflamed anger among the Pakistani population and exposed that country's rulers as impotent lackeys of the U.S. imperialist overlords. That anger boiled over when Democrat Dianne Feinstein let slip in a public Senate hearing that U.S. drone attacks were launched from a secret base inside Pakistan. According to the *New York Times* (23 February), "more than 70 United States military advisers and technical specialists are secretly working in Pakistan to help its armed forces battle Al Qaeda and the Taliban in the country's lawless tribal areas."

Since August, the Pakistani military, under intense pressure from Washington to curb the growing power of the Taliban and its allies, has been waging a brutal terror campaign in the rugged tribal areas bordering Afghanistan. Entire villages have been razed in "search and clearance operations," creating more than a quarter of a million refugees. The terror has only driven increasing numbers of people into the arms of the fundamentalists and the Pakistani government has repeatedly been forced to accept "truce" agreements, resulting in the creation of what are essentially fundamentalist ministates that are now the focus of U.S. drone bombing attacks.

Reuters photos

Above: U.S. troops patrolling Afghanistan's Helmand Province in February. Below: February 15 funeral for victims of U.S. missile attack in Pakistan's North Waziristan region, near Afghan border.

According to the *New York Times* (21 February), the bombing raids ordered by Obama inside Pakistan have "expanded" the policy introduced last year by George Bush. The attacks ordered by Bush targeted what Washington claimed were "safe havens" in Pakistan for Taliban and Al Qaeda forces fighting U.S. troops in Afghanistan. The attacks ordered by Obama on February 14 and 16 for the first time targeted camps run by Baitullah Mehsud. He is a fundamentalist leader accused of attacks against Pakistani security forces and political leaders but who "has played less of a direct role in attacks on American troops." In other words, the U.S. imperialists are now beginning to intervene militarily in Pakistan to support their client regime against fundamentalists seeking its removal. The client itself, meanwhile, alternates between terror and capitulation in dealing with the forces to whose destruction the American government is so committed. The bulk of the Pakistani army remains in the eastern part of the country, arrayed against Pakistan's perennial main enemy (and fellow nuclear-armed state) India, locked together in intractable conflict over Kashmir.

In taking their Afghan war further afield, the U.S. imperialists may be making the worst of a bad situation. A recent article in *Newsweek* (9 February) observes that for U.S. forces "the situation in Afghanistan is bad and getting worse" and asks: "So why not just get out?" The answer given is that, in the resulting power struggle, "the winning side would likely be the one backed by Pakistan, which may end up being the Taliban—just as it was in the last civil war."

During the presidential election, candidate Obama distinguished himself from Democratic rival Hillary Clinton and Republican John McCain by insisting that he would not shy away from intervening in Pakistan to chase down Taliban leaders. In office, Obama has not rescinded an order signed last July by Bush authorizing ground raids into Pakistan without prior approval by that country's government. The *Washington Post* (4 February) reported that Obama officials have decided that "Afghanistan and Pakistan are to be treated as a single theater of war" (they are calling it "Af-Pak"). If Obama is moving toward full-scale military intervention in Pakistan, with its large area, mountainous terrain and large, ethnically diverse and fractious population, the U.S. rulers will find themselves with a far greater mess on their hands than the military quagmires inherited from Bush.

The arrogant U.S. imperialists seem undeterred in their ambitions by the unwillingness of the other NATO countries thus far to commit any additional troops to the Afghanistan occupation. And underlining its evident conviction that any number of perceived enemies can be targeted simultaneously, Washington has not ceased to threaten Iran over its nuclear program. It could not be clearer that, in the context of such threats, Iran needs nuclear weapons to deter an imperialist attack.

Obama's escalation of the U.S./NATO war in Afghanistan comes as the military situation in that country is rapidly spiraling out of Washington's control. A December report by the International Council on Security and Development, a London-based think tank, reported that the Taliban "now holds a permanent presence in 72 percent of Afghanistan" and "are closing a noose around" Kabul. On February 11, Taliban gunmen and suicide bombers attacked

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New York Post's Racist Cartoon

On February 18 the *New York Post*, part of Rupert Murdoch's rightwing media empire, published a cartoon repugnant even by the loathsome benchmark of that gutter press. The *Post*'s page 12 Scan Delonas "cartoon" depicted two policemen, guns drawn, standing over a bullet-riddled creature they had gunned down, lying in a pool of blood. One cop says to the other, "They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill." Barack Obama signed the stimulus bill the previous day; the dead creature lying on a city sidewalk in the cartoon is a chimpanzee. The *Post* said that it was taking off from the story of an actual 200-pound rampaging chimpanzee that had mauled a woman in Connecticut and was killed; this, if anything, makes their racist amalgam even more hideous.

The message couldn't be clearer: Obama can claim all he wants that the civil rights movement got America "90 percent of the way" toward racial equality, but this is still racist, capitalist America. No matter how high up you get, black people are still to be targeted for repression, still "fair game" to be gunned down by the cops. Like a suppurating sore, the *Post*'s outburst reveals the virulent poison of racial oppression, which is structurally embedded in American capitalism.

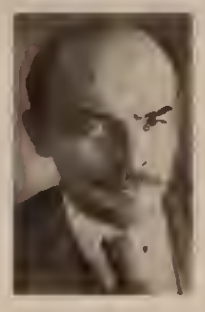
Here's the reality behind the racist *Post* cartoon: Oscar Grant, lying on an Oakland BART platform, shot in the back by a cop on New Year's Day 2009. Sean Bell, gunned down by New York City cops in a fusillade of 50 bullets on his wedding day in 2006. Even an 88-year-old black woman, Kathryn Johnston, wasn't safe in her own home, as Atlanta cops killed her in 2006. Amadou Diallo was brought down by a hail of 41 police bullets fired at the unarmed 22-year-old African immigrant in the vestibule of his home in 1999. There are so many thousands more, from past decades' lynchings to today's death penalty, the legacy of brutal chattel slavery.

Seizing on the justified outrage over the *Post*'s cartoon, black Democrat Al Sharpton has organized several protests against the paper, including a boycott campaign. For this liberal hustler, the aim is to build and cement support for Obama, the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, which is the greatest enemy of working people and the oppressed the world over. In a February 18 statement on the cartoon, Sharpton denounced the *Post* for "making inferences that are offensive and divisive at a time the nation struggles to come together to stabilize the economy." It's Sharpton's version of "national unity": stand by "our" president, who, along with his fellow Democrats, is now presiding over the unemployment, homelessness, foreclosures, the nearly 900,000 black men and women in prison and the prison-like inner-city schools that have come to define American capitalism.

While the reformist left fawned over Obama's election, we, as Marxists committed to the overturn of the bourgeois order through socialist revolution, gave no political support to Obama or any capitalist politician—Democrat, Republican, Green or "Independent." Obama serves as a very powerful propaganda weapon for the bourgeoisie, telling black people and the oppressed to shut up and stop complaining, because, you see, "the American dream" works. But "the American dream" is a nightmare, a cruel lie, and more so today as the global economic meltdown throws even more working people onto the scrap heap.

Liberals and reformists of course decry such symptoms of capitalist rot as the *Post*'s racist cartoon. But the special oppression of the black population is deeply rooted in the American state's origin as a slaveholding society and its continuation in capitalist wage slavery, with its periodic crises and wars and permanent need for a mass of unemployed, where blacks are the last hired and the first fired. Black oppression will not be done away with short of socialist revolution. The Democratic Party is the other party of racist U.S. imperialism and the class enemy of working people. We call for class struggle against the capitalist rulers. We fight to break workers and blacks from any illusions in bourgeois candidates and capitalist electoral politics, and win them to the struggle to build a multiracial working-class party, the necessary instrumentality to get rid of this rotting, racist capitalist system.■

TROTSKY



LENIN

Karl Marx and the U.S. Civil War

February is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Ahraham Lincoln, the president during the U.S. Civil War. While Lincoln was not a radical abolitionist and had initially opposed only the expansion of slavery, Karl Marx nonetheless recognized that Lincoln came to the understanding that defeating the Confederacy required the smashing of black chattel slavery. Marx hailed the Civil War as a great bourgeois-democratic revolution and rallied the European working class to support the victory of the North. We reprint below excerpts from an address drafted by Marx for the First International on the occasion of Lincoln's re-election in 1864. This was written before the systematic export of capital—i.e., imperialism—had come onto the world scene.

We congratulate the American people upon your re-election by a large majority.

If resistance to the Slave Power was the reserved watchword of your first election, the triumphant warcry of your re-election is, Death to Slavery....

When an oligarchy of 300,000 slave-holders dared to inscribe, for the first time in the annals of the world, "slavery" on the banner of Armed Revolt; when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great Democratic Republic had first sprung up, whence the first Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse given to the European revolution of the 18th century; when on those very spots counter-revolution, with systematic thoroughness, gloried in rescinding "the [...] ideas entertained [...] at the time of the formation of the old Constitution," and maintained "slavery to be a beneficent institution," indeed the only solution of the great problem of "the relation of labour to capital," and cynically proclaimed property in man "the cornerstone of the new edifice," then the working classes of Europe understood at once, even before the fanatic partisanship of the upper classes for the Confederate gentry had given its dismal warning, that the slave-holders' rebellion was to sound the tocsin for a general holy crusade of property against labour, and that for the men of labour, with their hopes for the future, even their past conquests were at stake in that tremendous conflict on the other side of the Atlantic. Everywhere they bore therefore patiently the hardships imposed upon them by the cotton crisis, opposed enthusiastically the pro-slavery intervention, importunities of their betters—and, from most parts of Europe, contributed their quota of blood to the good cause.

While the working men, the true political power of the North, allowed slavery to defile their own republic; while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white-skinned labourer to sell himself and choose his own master; they were unable to attain the true freedom of labour or to support their European brethren in their struggle for emancipation, but this barrier to progress has been swept off by the red sea of civil war.

The working men of Europe feel sure that, as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American Anti-Slavery War will do for the working classes. They consider it an earnest of the epoch to come that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded son of the working class, to lead his country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained race and the reconstruction of a social world.

—Karl Marx, "To Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America" (November 1864) [brackets in original]

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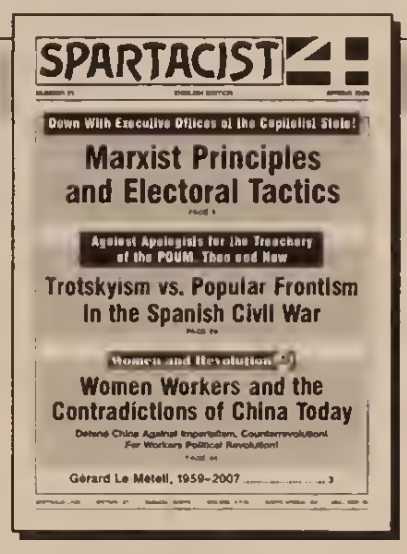

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Racist Lynchings of Ecuadorian Immigrants in Brooklyn and Long Island

Labor Must Mobilize to Defend Immigrants!

We reprint the following article from the January 31 newsletter of the New York Labor Black League for Social Defense, as reissued with minor corrections on February 7.

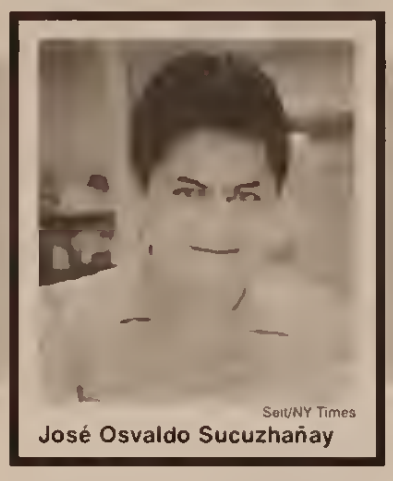
"Today my brother is the victim, but tomorrow it could be your brother, your mother, your father." These words were spoken by Diego Sucuzhañay following his brother's grisly murder. On the night of December 7, José Osvaldo Sucuzhañay, a 31-year-old Ecuadorian immigrant and father of two, was walking with his brother Rómel through the streets of Bushwick in Brooklyn. As they walked arm in arm, four black men pulled up alongside of them, got out of their SUV and hurled anti-gay and anti-Latino epithets at the brothers before launching their murderous attack. Rómel managed to escape, but they surrounded José, beat him and crushed his skull with a baseball bat. He died six days later in the hospital.

Just one month earlier, on November 8, four days after Obama was elected, a lynch mob brutally beat and stabbed Marcelo Lucero to death in the town of Patchogue in Long Island. Lucero tried to defend himself against the mob, but one of the racist thugs plunged a knife into his chest. Six of the attackers are white, and the seventh is the son of a Puerto Rican man and a black American woman. The racists who carried out this lynching had told a friend of theirs that they were going to "go jump a Mexican." One of the attackers said, "I don't go out doing this often—maybe only once a week." The *New York Times* reported that on the day of Lucero's killing, two members of this same mob fired a BB gun at Marlon García, 27, and struck him several times after García had tried to stop the beating of another man across the street.

The multiracial working class in the U.S. has a burning interest in mobilizing its social power in protest against these racist murders. This power should be mobilized to oppose anti-gay and anti-immigrant attacks. The New York Labor Black League for Social Defense says: An injury to one is an injury to all! Fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Everyone who made it into this country has the right to stay and live decently. Organize the unorganized—for labor action against racist terror!

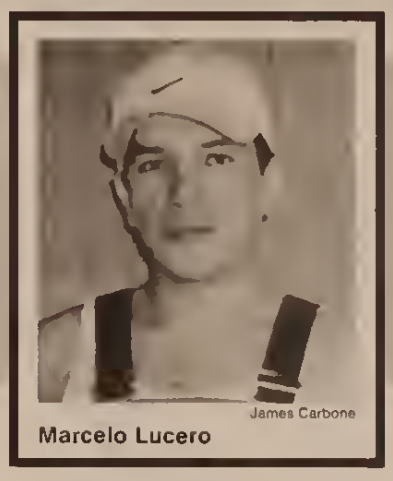
These lynchings are a by-product of the U.S. government's bipartisan campaign of terror against immigrants. As is the case during every economic crisis, the racist rulers today are carrying out mass deportations while scapegoating immigrants for the widespread unemployment and poverty that is an endemic part of capitalism. The latest Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) statistics show that during the 2008 fiscal year alone, a staggering total of 349,041 immigrants were deported. The Mexican government recently reported that from January to October 2008, the U.S. government deported 28,456 children to Mexico. These ruling-class attacks provide fertile ground for fascistic vermin like the Minutemen and outright fascist terrorists like the KKK and Nazis to come out of their holes to engage in their cowardly and murderous attacks against immigrants.

Risking their lives to get to the U.S., most immigrants arrive here to face brutal exploitation, poverty, discrimination, insults of every kind and constant fear of persecution by *la migra*. Before his death, Marcelo Lucero would often say to his mother, "Here a person suffers from several causes: work, racism and the family. The golden dream doesn't exist. Sometimes not even the money justifies this way of life" (*El Comercio* [Quito, Ecuador], 13 November 2008).



Seit/NY Times

José Osvaldo Sucuzhañay



James Carbone

Marcelo Lucero

Democratic president Barack Obama, the new Commander-in-Chief of bloody U.S. imperialism, has proven himself to be a staunch supporter of the "war on terror," including warrantless wiretapping and the renewal of the racist, anti-immigrant and anti-labor USA Patriot Act. This new, "liberal" overseer of the American plantation supports the death penalty, the system of legal lynching that is the legacy of black chattel slavery. He also supports beefed-up border patrol repression and the construction of fortified border walls to keep immigrants out (www.barackobama.com). Obama voted for the failed McCain-Kennedy immigration bill with its "guest worker" scheme of "legalization" through indentured servitude. Any workers who believe that the administration of Obama, the first black president in U.S. history, will bring real "change" in the wake of the much-despised Bush regime will see their hopes brutally dashed.

In line with our principled opposition to parties of the capitalist class enemy, the LBL, which was initiated by and is fraternally allied to the Spartacist League, a multiracial revolutionary Marxist organization, urged workers during the election campaign to give no vote to Obama or McCain or any other capitalist politician, including Green Party presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney. Wage slaves have no business being in the same party with their capitalist exploiters! Workers need their own party to fight for socialist revolution.

An Injury to One Is an Injury to All!

Before launching their fatal attack, Sucuzhañay's murderers also screamed an anti-gay slur at their victim, believing him to be gay simply for having his arm around his brother. Across the country, there has been a rash of attacks on gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people. These vile anti-gay bigots surely feel that they have the wind in their sails since the November elections, in which Proposition 8 in California overturned the legalization of same-sex marriage and two other states passed initiatives banning it. As we in the LBL say in our Ten-Point Program, we fight for "Full Democratic Rights for Homosexuals!"

Both of these lynchings involved attackers who are black or Latino, i.e., the very people who are inevitably the targets of the same forces that mobilize against immigrants. The uncle of José Pacheco, who is the black Puerto Rican youth arrested in conjunction with the murder of Marcelo Lucero, told reporters that the home of Pacheco's own parents was burned down twice when they first moved to the area in the 1990s!

The American bourgeoisie foments ethnic and racial hostilities to keep the working class divided and weak. As was noted in the 1890s in a letter from Friedrich Engels to a colleague in the U.S.: "Your bourgeoisie knows much better even than the Austrian Government how to play off one nationality against the other: Jews, Italians, Bohemians, etc., against Germans and Irish, and each one against the other, so that differences in the living standard of the workers exist, I believe, in New York to an extent unheard-of elsewhere."

As decaying capitalism's economic crisis threatens the jobs and livelihoods of millions, blacks and immigrants are hit the hardest. In this racist society black people are the last hired and first fired. The racial oppression of black people, which has its origins in black chattel slavery, is the bedrock of American capitalism. Meanwhile, the capitalist bosses also scapegoat immigrants in economic downturns as they ratchet up deportations.

Divisions among black, white and immigrant workers break down in the course of class struggle. Recent examples demonstrating this include the sit-down strike at Republic Windows in Chicago and the unionization of the Smithfield Foods plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina (see *Workers Vanguard* No. 927, 2 January). The workforces at both of these locations were largely black and immigrant. Ultimately what is necessary is a revolutionary Marxist party to instill class consciousness into the multiracial working class. We must combat anti-immigrant chauvinism among U.S.-born black and white workers. At the same time, immigrant workers must understand that anti-black racism must be defeated because it remains the touchstone of social reaction in the U.S.

Working-class immigrants are not simply victims. They produce wealth in society and therefore, together with black and white workers, they have the social power to bring society to a grinding halt. These workers represent a living bridge to the struggles of working people in Latin America and elsewhere. But the obstacle to any real mobilization and militant struggle to protect immigrants from lynch mob terror lies in the class-collaborationist political program of the protectionist,

continued on page 11

Organize the Unorganized! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

WV Photo

Labor Black League denounces bipartisan "war on terror" at united-front protest for Mumia Abu-Jamal in Oakland, April 2008.

The National Question in the Marxist Movement, 1848-1914

The following article, the text of a presentation given by Spartacist League Central Committee member Joseph Seymour at a 1976 European gathering, was originally printed in two parts in WV *Nos. 123 and 125 (3 and 17 September 1976). At the time of the talk, the Lebanese civil war was raging—hence, the references to Lebanese Muslims and Maronite Christians. Additionally, in 1976 we did not advocate independence for Quebec from Canada, while recognizing its right to self-determination. But as comrade Seymour noted in his presentation, "if the national polarization in Canada hardens and the working people of Quebec decisively opt for separatism, we may reverse that policy and come out for independence." Indeed, since 1995 we have advocated independence for Quebec (see "Independence for Quebec!"* Spartacist *[English-language edition] No. 52, Autumn 1995).*

As you are aware, our views on the national question, particularly concerning the Near East, are one of the most distinctive and controversial aspects of "Spartacism." Very often this question is the most obvious and sharpest difference when we first encounter tendencies that appear to be close to us.

This talk is designed as a contribution to understanding the theoretical underpinning of our current positions. In polemics against the Spartacist tendency and within the ostensibly Trotskyist movement, there are often references to the position Marx or Lenin took on this or that aspect of the national question. Without a thorough knowledge of the evolution of the Marxist position, in its historical context, it is impossible to determine whether or not, and how, these references are relevant.

I believe that an understanding of the evolution of the Marxist position on the national question from 1848 to 1914—i.e., from the origins of Marxism to the collapse of the Second International—bears on the Spartacist position in two significant ways. First, there is no Marxist program for the national question as such. The Marxist position has always had a predominantly strategic character, aimed at creating the conditions for a successful proletarian revolution. In this sense, I think that one can draw a contrast with the Marxist position on the woman question. The position in favor of abolition of the family and for the equality of women is a fundamental element of a communist society, and therefore is not subordinate to changing political conjunctures.

The Marxist position on the national question has a much more conjunctural character historically, and is much more determined by changing empirical circumstances. Thus, it is not only legitimate, but very often obligatory, to change a specific position on a specific national question in a very short period of time. Today we are opposed to the independence of Quebec, while of course recognizing the right of self-determination. But it is certainly possible that in a couple of years, if the national polarization in Canada hardens and the working people of Quebec decisively opt for separatism, we may reverse that policy and come out for independence. Such determinations have a conjunctural and a strategic character.

UDS

Czech rebels barricade gateway to Prague bridge during 1848 Revolution.

The second reason I believe a knowledge of pre-Leninist Marxism is important in this question is that our position involves opposition to the notion (which is a resurrection of the earliest Marxist position) that there exist progressive nations and reactionary nations within the colonial world. We do not regard the Palestinians or the Lebanese Muslims as inherently progressive, or the Hebrews and Lebanese Maronite Christians as inherently reactionary, as outposts of imperialism. Many of our disputes with various ostensibly Trotskyist tendencies—for example, over the India-Pakistan war in 1972, over Angola and over Lebanon—involve our rejection of the notion of progressive nationalities and progressive bourgeois state-building in this epoch.

W. Hall

John Mayall

Friedrich Engels (left) and Karl Marx.

"Progressive Nations" in the Revolutions of 1848

Marxism as a political tendency begins in early 1846 with the organization of the Communist Corresponding Society in Brussels. What distinguished Marx from other German communists was his belief that it was necessary to have an alliance with the bourgeois democrats, and that the road to socialism in Germany ran through an imminent bourgeois-democratic revolution. As such, he became committed to the program of the unification of Germany as an inherent and important component of that revolution.

The unification of Germany was organically linked to the radical redrawing of boundaries throughout Eastern Europe. Marx was committed to the restoration of an independent Poland, which would serve as a democratic buffer against tsarist Russia. Russia was the strongest military power in Europe, and was considered by Marx as the bulwark of reaction in which a bourgeois-democratic revolution was *not possible*—a position he maintained until the late 1870s. One cannot understand the Marxist position on the national question unless one realizes that for a Central European revolutionary in the mid-19th century, Russia was analogous to the United States for a South American revolutionary today. Radical democracy in Central Europe was linked to the liberation of Poland and a revolutionary war against tsarist Russia.

A more complex aspect of the unification of Germany arose from the fact that part of the German nation was in the Hapsburg or Austro-Hungarian empire. The majority population of that empire consisted of the various Slavic nations, who were mainly peasant peoples. The most important and advanced of these Slavic nations were the Czechs, and Bohemia was about 40 percent German (concentrated among the urban population) and 60 percent Czech, with virtually all of the peasants being Czech.

Marx and Engels maintained that, with the exception of Poland, the Slavic peoples of the Austro-Hungarian empire were too backward to have a bourgeois-democratic revolution. From that premise, they drew the program of dividing Central and East Europe into three great states—Greater Poland, Greater Germany and Greater Hungary—in which the western and southern Slavs would be expected to assimilate to the higher national cultures.

When the revolution of 1848 broke out, the Slavs—not unnaturally—did not go along with this program. The Czech liberals, led by František Palacký, proposed instead a federated Austro-Hungarian state allied to a democratic Germany. Thus there was a genuine conflict between the national-democratic movement in Germany and Hungary on the one hand, and the Slavs in the Austro-Hungarian empire, who in part looked to Russia to preserve the Austro-Hungarian status quo.

This situation came to a head in early 1849, when the Russian army crushed the Hungarian national movement of Lajos Kossuth and the Croat national minority maintained a neutral position at best. At that point, Marx and Engels developed a program which amounted to the national, if not physical, genocide of the western and southern Slavs in the interests of the democratic or progressive peoples.

In "Hungary and Panslavism" (1849) Engels writes:

> "Everywhere the forward-looking class, the carrier of progress, the bourgeoisie, was German or Magyar. The Slavs found it difficult to develop a bourgeoisie, the South Slavs were only very partially able to do so. Along with the bourgeoisie, industrial strength, capital, was in German or Magyar hands. As German education developed, the Slavs also came under the intellectual tutelage of the Germans, even deep in Croatia. The

New York Public Library

Lajos Kossuth, leader of 1848-49 Hungarian Revolution.

same thing took place, only later and therefore on a smaller scale in Hungary, where the Magyars together with the Germans assumed intellectual and commercial leadership...."

And in another article, "Democratic Pan-slavism" (1849), he concluded:

> "We repeat: Except for the Poles, the Russians and at best the Slavs in Turkey, no Slavic people has a future, for the simple reason that all other Slavs lack the most basic historic, geographic, political and industrial prerequisites for independence and vitality."

Referring to the Russian-Slav counter-revolutionary movement, he wrote:

> "Then for a moment the Slavic counter-revolution with all its barbarism will engulf the Austrian monarchy and the camarilla will find out what kind of allies it has. But with the first victorious uprising of the French proletariat...the Germans and Magyars in Austria will become free and will take bloody revenge on the Slavic barbarians. The general war which will then break out will explode this Slavic league and these petty, bull-headed nations will be destroyed so that nothing is left of them but their names. "The next world war will cause not only reactionary classes and dynasties but also entire reactionary peoples to disappear from the earth. And that too would be progress."

There was, in the Revolution of 1848, a prominent leftist who did adhere to the doctrine of national self-determination as a principle. This was Mikhail Bakunin, who wrote in his 1848 "Appeal to the Slavs":

> "Down with the artificial boundaries which have been forcibly erected by despotic congresses according to so-called historical, geographical, strategic necessities! There should no longer be any other barriers between the nations but those corresponding to nature, to justice and those drawn in a democratic sense which the sovereign will of the people

Nadar

Mikhail Bakunin

> themselves denotes on the basis of their national qualities.... The welfare of the nations is never assured as long as anywhere in Europe one single people is living in oppression."
>
> —translated in Horace B. Davis. *Nationalism and Socialism*

At the general theoretical level, Marx and Engels denounced Bakunin for utopian egalitarianism applied to nations, which anticipates their later conflict with Bakuninite anarchism where the same principles are applied to individuals. Thus, Engels polemicized against Bakunin in February 1849:

> "There is no mention of the very real obstacles in the way of such universal liberation, of the completely different levels of civilization of the various peoples, of their equally different political needs conditioned by them. The word 'freedom' takes the place of everything. There is no mention of reality, or insofar as it is considered at all, it is represented as something entirely reprehensible, something arbitrarily produced by 'congresses of despots' and by 'diplomats'."
>
> —"Democratic Panslavism"

On a more concrete level, Marx and Engels regarded so-called democratic pan-Slavism as utopian, which in practice would only serve tsarist Russian expansionism.

Marx's position on the Slav question in 1848 has drawn very considerable criticism, not least from within the later Marxist movement itself. The purpose of this talk is not to second-guess Marx and Engels' empirical judgments, but rather to focus on their methodology. I will, however, indicate the two criticisms of their position on the Slav question which I consider to be the strongest.

First, there is a too-close identification of political dominance with cultural development. The Czechs of Bohemia certainly had the economic and cultural level equal, if not greater, to the Hungarians and the Poles. Secondly, there is an overestimation of the attractiveness of pan-Slavism, and therefore the alliance of all Slavic peoples under Russian dominance. Consequently, there was a corresponding underestimation of the nationalism of the particular Slav nations.

Bourgeois Reaction and Bourgeois Progress

As a result of the defeat of radical democracy in the revolutions of 1848, Marx substantially modified his program. He blamed the defeat of radical democracy and the proletarian vanguard on objective economic backwardness, not only in Germany and Austria, but also in France. Therefore, classic post-1848 Marxism placed a heavy programmatic emphasis on creating the objective conditions which would enable the proletariat to take power.

This consisted in furthering economic development, in which the unification of Germany and of Italy was considered extremely important. Only economic development would lay the basis for the organization of the proletariat and the expansion of democratic rights to provide the conditions for proletarian power.

An important component of the post-1848 program continued to be the advocacy of the destruction of tsarist Russia's military power...by anybody. Marx supported the British and French in the Crimean War and always supported Turkey against Russia, on the grounds that Russia was *the* great reactionary power in Europe.

The next major historical event after 1848 that bears on the national question was the Austro-Italian war of 1859. Here, Marx reaffirmed his fundamental commitment to the unification of Germany as the most progressive national development in continental Europe. He did not support the Italians even though he favored Italian unification because the anti-German Napoleon III of France was an ally of Italy. Marx believed that a victory for the Italian-Napoleonic alliance would threaten the unification of Germany. Believing he had to choose which was more progressive—the unification of Italy or of Germany—he chose that of Germany.

From 1848 onward, Marx and Engels were often accused by their opponents within the left of being German chauvinists. They denied that, arguing that their position on the unification of Germany was objective, and that it did not reflect subjective nationalist prejudice. A united Germany would give an enormous impetus to the economic development of Europe, and would produce the most advanced workers movement in Europe. They were proved objectively correct in that sense. However, it was only in 1870 that they got a chance to prove demonstrably that they were not German chauvinists.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Marx and Engels had the following model of what Europe should look like: it was a Europe of multinational states grouped around the great progressive nations—Greater Poland, Greater Hungary, Greater Germany, Greater France and Great Britain (Greater England). The other peoples, which they called the ruins of peoples —*die Völkertrümmer*—were expected to assimilate. Among these ruined peoples they counted the Scots, the Welsh, the Basques and the Czechs.

In his 1859 pamphlet on the Austro-Italian war, "Po and Rhine," Engels spells out this conception:

> "No one will assert that the map of Europe is definitely settled. All changes, however, if they are to be lasting, must be of such a nature as to bring the great and vital nations ever closer to their *true* natural borders as determined by speech and sympathies, while at the same time

Aquatint by Oietrich, from drawing by Piwarski

Warsaw masses seize arsenal during Polish uprising of 1830-31.

> the ruins of peoples, which are still to be found here and there, and are no longer capable of leading an independent national existence, must be incorporated into the larger nations, and either dissolve in them or else remain as ethnographic monuments of no political significance." [emphasis in original]

Irish Independence and English Proletarian Revolution

The first major change in this schema occurred in the late 1860s in Britain, where Marx changed his position on the Irish question from the assimilation of the Irish, who were certainly not a great historic people, to independence for Ireland.

The failure of organized Marxism in England obscures the fact that classical Marxism regarded the English revolution as central. Marx devoted much of his energy to the English workers movement. If in the 1850s Marx considered Germany and Italy under-ripe for proletarian revolution, he considered Britain overripe. All of the things that Marx was fighting for in Germany were realized in Britain—a large, well-organized industrial proletariat, a stable bourgeois legality and freedom from Russian invasion.

Yet politically, the British working class in this period moved backward; they were less advanced in 1865 than in 1845. So the English question was important for Marx, not only because the English revolution was strategically important, but because the contradiction between the advanced character of English society and the political backwardness of the proletariat put a question mark over Marx's entire worldview.

In the late 1860s Marx believed he had found a partial key to this problem in an unresolved national question—namely, the Irish question. In England, Marx ran up against the problem of a divided working class in a multinational state. In 1870, he wrote to two of his American followers:

> "Every industrial and commercial center in England now possesses a working class *divided* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the *ruling* nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country *against Ireland* .. The Irish man pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the *English rule in Ireland.* "This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling class. This *antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class,* despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it....
>
> "England, being the metropolis of capital, the power which has hitherto ruled the world market, is for the present the most important country for the workers' revolution, and moreover, the *only* country in which the material conditions for this revolution have developed up to a certain degree of maturity. Therefore to hasten the social revolution in England is the most important object of the International Workingmen's Association. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent." [emphasis in original]
>
> —Marx to S. Meyer and A. Vogt, 9 April 1870

It was precisely the advanced nature of English society that caused Marx to anticipate the later problems of the workers movement in a multinational state. I should point out that Marx's position on the Irish question anticipated, but was not identical with, the orthodox Leninist position. Marx expected that an independent Ireland would draw the Irish out of England—that the economic development of Ireland would lead to the repatriation of the Irish working class from England. He looked for the physical separation of the English and Irish working classes as a precondition to political unity. It was not simply the *advocacy* of independence that was important, but its *realization in fact.* As we shall see, it is with Lenin that the advocacy of the right of self-determination becomes key.

Franco-Prussian War: End of an Epoch

The next major change which rendered what could be called the 1848 program obsolete was the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Marx initially supported the Prussians on the grounds that the war was for the defense of the precarious unity of Germany. When the Prussians defeated Napoleon III and determined to conquer Alsace-Lorraine and crush the

continued on page 6

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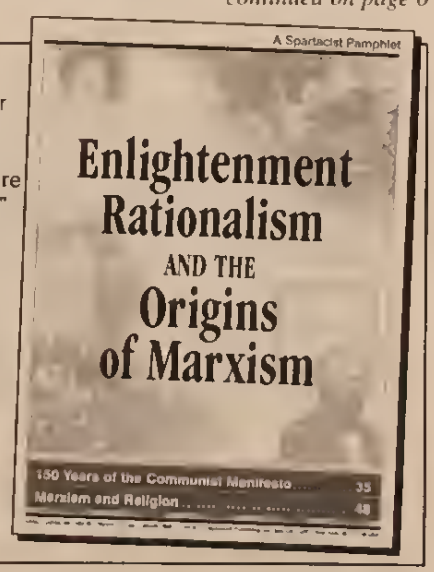

National Question...

(continued from page 5)

Paris proletariat, Marx shifted sides, supporting the French. And in fact, Engels, who was a capable military critic, apparently produced a plan for the French army to defeat the Prussians. Eduard Bernstein, who was Engels' literary executor, destroyed this plan so that it wouldn't embarrass the German Social Democracy should it fall into the government's hands.

Marx and Engels' defensism of the French against Bismarck's expansionism was extremely important in terms of enhancing their moral authority as socialist leaders. After 1870, the accusation that Marx and Engels were really German chauvinists, hiding behind pseudo-scientific doctrines, was obviously untenable. The hegemony which Marxism attained in the international workers movement by the 1890s was a direct product of Marx and Engels' absolutely indisputable internationalism.

Engels on the East European Question

The Franco-Prussian War of 1870 rendered Marx's *Grossdeutsche* [Greater Germany] position—the inclusion of German-speaking Austria—obsolete. It was now a fantastical program. Marx didn't like it but he had to accept that—except for Alsace-Lorraine—Germany had acquired its boundaries. This, of course, reopened the question of what to do with the Austro-Hungarian empire. Marx died before he tried to figure out a solution to that insoluble problem. Engels, who lived longer, was stuck with it.

By the time he died in 1895, Engels had moved very far away from the 1848 position on what was called the Eastern question—the East European question—but had not entirely abandoned it. By the late 1870s, Marx and Engels had come to expect a radical democratic revolution in tsarist Russia. This made the question of Polish independence much less important strategically. Nonetheless, Engels still regarded Russia as in some sense the gendarme of Europe, even in the 1880s. He was, therefore, very reluctant to accept the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian empire, believing that it would primarily benefit tsarist expansionism. Engels' movement from the notion of "progressive nations" to advocating the right of self-determination can be seen in a letter written in 1882 and an article written in 1890.

In the early 1880s, Engels faced "Luxemburgism" on the national question even before Rosa Luxemburg. For well-motivated reasons, some Polish socialists did not want to fight for the independence of Poland, but rather looked forward to participating in the greater Russian revolution. Engels opposed this position, but he opposed it with a new argument. No longer was an independent Poland seen as a kind of democratic bastion against reactionary Russia—that was not the primary argument. Rather an independent Poland was necessary to sharpen the class antagonisms within Polish society. He wrote to Kautsky (7 February 1882):

> "It is historically impossible for a great people even to discuss internal problems of any kind seriously, as long as it lacks national independence. Before 1859 there was no question of socialism in Italy; even the number of Republicans was small.... Only after 1861 the Republicans increased in influence and later transferred their best elements to the Socialists....
>
> "So long as Poland is partitioned and subjugated, therefore, neither a strong socialist party can develop in the country itself, nor can there arise real international intercourse between the proletarian parties in Germany, etc., with *other than emigre Poles* ..
>
> "An international movement of the proletariat is possible only among independent nations." [emphasis in original]

Gianni Dagli Orti

Bombardment of Paris during 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War.

There is still the empirical qualification of "great nations," not all nations. In the same letter, Engels still doesn't think much of independence for the Czechs, Croats, Romanians, etc.:

> "Now you may ask me [this to Kautsky, who, incidentally, was half Czech] whether I have no sympathy whatever for the small Slavic peoples, and remnants of peoples, which have been severed asunder by the three wedges driven in the flesh of Slavdom: the Germans, Magyars and Turks? In fact I have damned little sympathy for them."

However, Engels agrees that after the fall of the tsar it would be all right for the small Slavic peoples to have their independence: *after, not before*. Then he adds, "I am certain that six months of independence will suffice for most Austro-Hungarian Slavs to bring them to a point where they will beg to be re-admitted." So Engels still considered the smaller peoples of East Europe as economically unviable units, and the Austro-Hungarian state as in some sense progressive.

By 1890 his position had undergone considerable evolution toward the classic Second International position in favor of the right of self-determination. During the 1880s, which was the beginning of the imperialist epoch, the alliances were formed which would result in World War I: tsarist Russia and bourgeois-democratic France against Wilhelmian Germany and Austria-Hungary. Engels foresaw that such a war would have a completely reactionary character. Furthermore, he was aware that changes in military technology meant that the war would be incredibly destructive, and that it would be impossible to predict who would win such a war.

In the 1880s, one begins to notice in Engels' writings and in social-democratic propaganda a strong antiwar and anti-militarist thrust which was absent from the pre-1870 period. As a result there is a much more sympathetic attitude toward self-determination in East Europe. Discussing what will happen the day after tsarism is overthrown, Engels writes in 1890:

> "On the same day Austria will lose its single, historical justification for existence—that of a barrier against the Russian drive toward Constantinople.... Magyars, Rumanians, Serbs, Bulgars, Arnauts, Greeks and Turks will then finally be in a position to settle their own mutual disputes without the intervention of foreign powers, to settle among themselves the boundaries of their individual national territories, to manage their affairs according to their own judgments."
>
> —"The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsardom"

Kautsky: Multinational States Are Reactionary

After Engels' death, in the period of the Second International, one can distinguish four characteristic poles on the national question: the German social-democratic center, whose theoretical spokesman was Karl Kautsky; the German-dominated Austro-Hungarian social democracy, whose theoretical spokesmen were Karl Renner and Otto Bauer; Rosa Luxemburg's Polish group; and Lenin's Bolsheviks.

The differences and similarities between these tendencies are extremely complex and defy a simple schema. For example, on the question of the right of self-determination one would find Kautsky and Lenin in favor, and Bauer/Renner and Luxemburg against. On the question of whether to have a centralized rather than a nationally federated party one would find Kautsky, Luxemburg and Lenin for, and Bauer/Renner against. However, in certain aspects of methodology, I would argue that Kautsky and Luxemburg tended to emphasize the objective economic factor in determining the configuration of nation-states, although they drew diametrically opposite programmatic conclusions. On the other hand, Bauer/Renner and Lenin tended to emphasize the subjective factor, and the question of how to achieve the unity of the workers movement within a multinational state. Finally, I will argue that Lenin's position is unique in his heavy emphasis on the question of the right of self-determination, rather than on any particular configuration of nation-states.

Under Kautsky's guidance, the Marxist movement finally liquidated the outdated notion that tsarist Russia was somehow more reactionary than Wilhelmian Germany. Consequently, the Second International in its 1896 convention in London was now able to assert the general principle of the right of self-determination.

Kautsky's position was that the Russian, Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires were essentially feudal remnants

Verlag Kurt Desch

Karl Kautsky

—that they were cases of arrested development. He maintained that a normal, healthy bourgeois development in East Europe required the breakup of these multinational units into their constituent nations. In other words, Kautsky regarded the national liberation of the smaller Slavic peoples as a task of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in East Europe.

Because the Austrian social democracy did not agree with this position, Kautsky

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never fought for it publicly. However, his real position was for the dissolution of the multinational states in East Europe. This comes through clearly in a letter (5 June 1901) from Kautsky to Victor Adler, head of the Austrian party:

> "Most of our people suffer from the delusion that one can find a solution to every problem, if only one is clever enough. But there are insoluble problems, and the establishment of a viable Austria is one of them. National autonomy would not be a remedy either. It is essential for us in our propaganda and organisation, but under the given conditions, and with the present relation of forces, it is not conducive to a solution.
>
> "In Austria of all places, a gradual approach to some solution or other is unthinkable. The only cure lies in complete collapse. That Austria still exists is to me not proof of its viability, nor yet evidence that we now have the political basis for a slow and peaceful development; all it proves is that bourgeois society is no longer capable of doing away with even the most rotten structures: the Sultan, Tsarism, Austria."
>
> —quoted in George Lichtheim, *Marxism* (1961)

Bauer/Renner: Saving the Austro-Hungarian State

The national program of Austrian social democracy, codified at the Brünn (Brno in present-day Czechoslovakia) Congress in 1898 called for a federated, democratic Austro-Hungarian state, and did not call for the right of self-determination. The national program of the Russian social democracy, codified in 1903 before the split, called for a unitary state with local autonomy, and did call for the right of self-determination. This significant difference cannot be explained simply on the basis of left versus right. The Russian Mensheviks also supported the right of self-determination, while even radicals in the Austrian party, like Friedrich Adler, did not advocate it.

Why was the simple solution of breaking the empire up into its constituent nations unpopular among Austrian social democrats of all shades? The problem—and this is why Kautsky was right to call it insoluble—was that everyone knew the breakup of Austria-Hungary would precipitate a war between Russia and Germany over the spoils. The various nationalities in the Austro-Hungarian empire hated one another, but they feared tsarist Russia and Wilhelmian Germany more. In contrast to all shades of Polish nationalism, the program of mainstream Czech nationalism was *not* independence. Rather, it was extreme federalism—creating a state within a state—combined with some

Verlag Kurt Desch

Otto Bauer

kind of extraterritorial control over all Czechs in the empire.

(I have the impression that present-day French Canadian nationalism is rather similar to pre-World War I Czech nationalism. The goal is not outright independence, but rather virtually unlimited autonomy for Quebec plus some kind of union of all French-Canadians throughout Canada.)

So the Austrian Socialist Party sought to devise a program that would preserve Austria-Hungary in the face of violent national antagonisms. The heart of this program was so-called "cultural-national autonomy," according to which nations were no longer associated with territories, but were embodied in individuals. In practice this meant that a Czech in Vienna could attend an exclusively Czech school and a German in Prague an exclusively German school. In fact, Karl Renner likened nationality to religion and argued that national organization should be modeled on churches. He writes in 1908:

Ullstein

Rosa Luxemburg

> "We must draw on the map a double network, the one economical, the other political. We must cut in two the sum of the activities of the state, separating national and political matters. We must organize the population twice; once along the lines of nationality, the second time, in relation to the state, and each time in administrative units of different form."
>
> —quoted in Arthur G. Kogan, "The Social Democrats in the Hapsburg Monarchy" in *Journal of Modern History* (1949)

From the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism, the worst thing about the Bauer/Renner position was that it regarded nationality as a positive value. They actually presented their scheme to save the ramshackle Austro-Hungarian empire as an anticipation of communist society. Bauer writes in his 1907 opus, *The National Question and Social Democracy*:

> "The organization of mankind into autonomous national communities enjoying, organizing, and developing their cultural goals is the final national aim of international Social-Democracy."
>
> —translated in Robert A. Kann, *The Multi-National Empire*

For Bauer, the state may wither away, but national affiliation goes on forever.

Luxemburg: National Blindness and Revolutionary Optimism

Now we come to the anti-Bauer, Rosa Luxemburg. It is important to emphasize that Luxemburg's position on the national question is very much Polish-centered which in a sense is a paradox. There were, however, rather plausible reasons for a Polish revolutionary Marxist to oppose the independence of Poland. Luxemburg inherited that tradition, she didn't invent it. One must realize that Poland was the most advanced, most industrialized part of the Russian empire with privileged access to a relatively large market. From the 1880s on, Polish nationalism was a petty-bourgeois, not a big-bourgeois, phenomenon. Luxemburg was convinced that the economic integration of Poland with Russia had gone so far that there was no possibility of an independent, viable Poland. So she considered Polish nationalism a form of petty-bourgeois reactionary utopianism analogous to Proudhonism in France or Bakuninite anarchism in Spain.

Rosa Luxemburg's position on Polish independence is also closely linked with her revolutionary optimism concerning the possibility of a socialist revolution breaking out in the Russian empire and then spreading west. She more or less accepted Trotsky's position on the permanent revolution in Russia. In fact, Trotsky's seminal articles on the subject were first published in Luxemburg's Polish-language journal. Thus, Luxemburg developed an attitude toward the Russian empire that was analogous to Marx's attitude toward the German nation on the eve of 1848: for her the Russian empire became progressive as a powerful material basis for the coming proletarian revolution.

Luxemburg did not recognize what Lenin did: that the antagonisms between the Polish, Ukrainian and Great Russian working classes were an ***obstacle*** to a successful revolution in the tsarist empire. Her method of countering nationalist attitudes exclusively through internationalist propaganda was not enough. A positive programmatic opposition to tsarist Russia as "the prison house of nations" was necessary.

Lenin: Self-Determination and Workers Unity

The Leninist position on the national question was only developed in its final form during World War I, around 1917, but I believe it is basically relevant to the pre-1914 period.

Superficially, the Bolshevik position appears to be orthodox Kautskyan. However, I believe that the formal similarities obscure significant differences. Kautsky advocated self-determination because he was really in favor of independence as a means of pushing the bourgeois-democratic revolution in East Europe forward. Insofar as Lenin recognized that national emancipation for Poland, for the Ukraine, for the Czechs was an uncompleted bourgeois-democratic task there was a similarity of position.

But Lenin's position was not essentially a two-stage revolution which looked forward to a relatively lengthy period of development of a bourgeois-democratic Polish, Ukrainian or Czech state. Rather, what Lenin emphasized—and he was the first Marxist to do so—was *advocacy* of the right of self-determination as a necessary means of unifying the working class in a multinational state.

Lenin maintained that Luxemburg's abstract propaganda in favor of internationalism was not adequate to convince the Poles and the Ukrainians that the Great Russian socialists were not chauvinist. The workers movement in the oppressor nation must demonstrate in practice and in immediate programmatic form that it supports the right to independence of the oppressed nation. For Lenin, the question of whether independence would be realized or not was not a fundamental question, it was secondary. Before the 1917 Revolution, the Bolsheviks did not take a position for or against independence for Poland, the Ukraine or Finland. The core of Lenin's position comes through in "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (1914):

> "Whether the Ukraine, for example, is destined to form an independent state is a matter that will be determined by a thousand unpredictable factors. Without attempting idle *"guesses,"* we firmly uphold something that is beyond doubt: the right of the Ukraine to form such a state. We respect this right; we do not uphold the privileges of Great Russians with regard to Ukrainians; we ***educate*** the masses in the spirit of recognition of that right, in the spirit of rejecting ***state*** privileges for any nation." [emphasis in original]

In New Left and "Third World" Stalinist circles, Lenin's position is systematically misinterpreted so that he appears as a supporter of any demand put forward by an oppressed national minority. The anti-Luxemburgist Lenin wrongly overshadows the anti-nationalist Lenin. Lenin was violently hostile to "cultural-national autonomy" because it directly and immediately furthered nationalist ideology. He was opposed to federalism, and favored limited regional autonomy for minority nations in a unitary state. On this latter point, he was in basic agreement with Luxemburg. Some bourgeois commentators have noted that Lenin seems to have

B.D. Vigilev

V. I. Lenin

an all-or-nothing position on the national question. This is in contrast to the Austrian social democrats who offered the population an infinite gradation of steps between independence and assimilation. Richard Pipes in his *The Formation of the Soviet Union* writes:

> "Lenin's theory of national self-determination, viewed as a solution of the national problem in Russia, was entirely inadequate. By offering the minorities virtually no choice between assimilation and complete independence, it ignored the fact that they desired neither."

However, Lenin's program was not designed to be popular with Russia's minorities at any given time. It was designed to foster the fighting unity of the working class within the Russian state. If the working masses of the various nations are so hostile to one another that it makes unified class struggle virtually impossible, then separation into independent states is called for. Where national minorities choose to coexist within the same state framework, the task of Leninists is to break down all the barriers separating the working masses of the different nationalities. While championing the equality of languages and related democratic rights, we work for the gradual, organic assimilation of the various nationalities making up the working class.■

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Afghanistan...

(continued from page 1)

the Justice Ministry and two other government buildings in the capital, killing at least 20 people. A conservative military analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies wrote (*Nation* online, 10 October 2008): "We currently are losing," adding, "We face a crisis in the field—right now."

Meanwhile in Pakistan, fundamentalists opposed to the U.S.-backed regime have in the past several months dramatically extended their reach to more developed regions beyond the western tribal areas. Over 140 girls' schools have been blown up or burned down in the North West Frontier Province. In September a suicide bomb attack demolished the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, killing more than 50 people. Less than 100 miles from Islamabad, in the Swat valley, a relatively developed area of the North West Frontier Province that was once a leading tourist attraction and site of a ski resort, months of clashes between security forces and fundamentalists resulted in yet another "truce" last week in which the government accepted the imposition of Islamic law in the region.

Fundamentalist forces in Pakistan pose an increasing threat to the vital supply line that carries more than three-quarters of the provisions for U.S./NATO forces in landlocked Afghanistan. That route runs more than 700 miles from the port of Karachi, north to Peshawar and then through the Khyber Pass, a critical gateway since the time of Alexander the Great. Attacks on truck convoys and the bombing of a key bridge have turned the stretch of road from Peshawar to the Khyber Pass into a deathtrap. Meanwhile, the Obama administration is scrambling to come up with an alternative to the crucial U.S. air base in Kyrgyzstan, after that country's president—within hours of being granted a hefty aid package by Russia—ordered the base to be closed within six months.

WV Map (sources include *Economist*)

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Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter's National Security Adviser and current Obama foreign policy adviser, at Khyber Pass outpost overlooking Afghanistan in 1980, as U.S. financed and armed cutthroat *mujahedin* against Soviet Red Army.

Obama took office pledging to draw down U.S. troop levels in Iraq in order to pursue what a significant portion of the U.S. bourgeoisie sees as more strategic aims, including the occupation of Afghanistan. A major consideration behind this policy is the encirclement of China. Ultimately, the U.S. imperialists aim to restore capitalist rule in the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state, and for this they have a two-pronged strategy: military pressure combined with capitalist economic penetration. At the same time, the Democrats, backed by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, have been in the forefront of those pushing anti-China chauvinist protectionism. It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defense of China and those other countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown: Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam.

Only Socialist Revolution Can End Imperialist War

In the lead-up to the 2001 and 2003 invasions, the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), stood for the military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against imperialist attack without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats or the bloody capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. We underlined that every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed the world over. Today, we call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops and bases from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia!

The bombings in Afghanistan and the devastation of Iraq have gone hand in hand with the capitalist rulers' onslaught against working people, minorities and most everyone else domestically. The escalation of the conflicts into Pakistan by the new U.S. administration takes place as the economic base holding up America's monstrous military power is undergoing a meltdown, which has now taken on international proportions. We have stressed from the beginning that the chief means of defending neocolonial Afghanistan and Iraq against the overwhelming military might of American imperialism and its allies is international working-class struggle, especially by the multiracial U.S. proletariat.

Giving this decrepit system a little boost, the reformist left embraced a perspective of "Anybody but Bush," which meant barely pretending to care that candidate Obama promised continued imperialist depredations overseas. As Obama got closer to the White House, they pretty much allowed their "antiwar movement" to lapse; and when they did manage a peep of protest it was about Iraq, with barely a mention of Afghanistan, Obama's "good war."

Now these reformists are on honeymoon with Barack Obama. The purpose of their "antiwar movement" was not to struggle on behalf of the victims of U.S. imperialism but to forge a political alliance with supposedly "peace-loving" sections of the bourgeoisie (i.e., Democratic politicians). With Obama they have gotten what they wanted, while he delivers on his warmongering campaign promises. Now they will plead with him to change his mind and adopt more pacifistic and people-friendly "priorities."

A case in point is the "National Assembly to End the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars and Occupations," a lash-up that grew out of a gathering in Cleveland last June in which fake leftists such as Socialist Action, the ISO, the Party for Socialism and Liberation and Workers World joined with an array of liberals. Endorsers included the Progressive Democrats of America and Cynthia McKinney, presidential candidate of the bourgeois Green Party. The National Assembly, which has called for demonstrations on March 21 demanding "Troops Home Now From Iraq and Afghanistan," features on its Web site a link to a letter to Obama calling on him "to end the emphasis on militarism in U.S. relations with other nations and to set a goal of ending war in the 21st Century."

The capitalist system cannot be pressured or reformed to work in the interest of human needs. The relentless drive for profits and spheres of influence by the rulers of the U.S. and other big capitalist powers necessarily results in neocolonial pillage and wars. Imperialist aggression and war are not "policies" that can be ended within the framework of capitalism—the entire system must be overturned! Only by wresting the means of production from the hands of the capitalist imperialist rulers and creating an international planned economy can the needs of the billions of toilers now consigned to hideous poverty begin to be met and the threat of war ended once and for all.

Islamic Reactionaries, the CIA and the Red Army in Afghanistan

Largely the creation of the Pakistani military and Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) as well as the American CIA, the Taliban and Al Qaeda are Frankenstein's monsters turned on their former masters. The U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, among others, armed, funded and trained reactionary *mujahedin* (holy warriors) to kill Soviet soldiers following the entry of the Red Army into Afghanistan in 1979 at the request of the modernizing nationalist PDPA regime.

That war, in which imperialist-backed forces threatened the southern flank of the Soviet Union, posed an acid test for revolutionaries. The Soviet military intervention was one of the few genuinely progressive acts carried out by the Stalinist bureaucracy. The Red Army intervened on behalf of a regime that sought to introduce minimal social reforms and faced a *jihad* (holy war) led by reactionary landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs.

The U.S. imperialists seized on the Red Army intervention as the pretext for their revived anti-Soviet crusade ("Cold War II"). As the CIA undertook its biggest covert operation ever, Afghanistan became the front line of the imperialists' relentless drive to destroy the Soviet Union. In 1998, Zbigniew Brzezinski, national security adviser to the Democratic Carter administration, boasted: "That secret operation was an excellent idea. It had the effect of drawing the Russians into the Afghan trap." Today, Brzezinski is a key foreign policy adviser in the Obama administration.

The Soviet intervention was unambiguously progressive, underlining the Trotskyist understanding that despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state embodying historic gains of the October Revolution of 1917, centrally the planned economy and collectivized property. These were enormous gains, not least for women and the historically Muslim peoples of Soviet Central Asia, where conditions before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution had been as backward and benighted as in Afghanistan. For Afghanistan, which is not a nation but a patchwork of tribes and peoples, with its minuscule proletariat, progress would have to be brought in from the outside. The international Spartacist tendency, now the International Communist League, said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples.

In stark contrast, the bulk of the left internationally lined up with the imperialists by denouncing the Soviet "invasion" of Afghanistan. The anti-Communist International Socialist Organization (ISO) and its then-parent group in Britain, Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP), criminally stood foursquare with the imperialists. The 12 January 1980 issue of the SWP's *Socialist Worker* blared, "Troops Out of Afghanistan!"

Today, in a lengthy article in *International Socialist Review* (January-February 2009), the ISO essentially disappears the gains, particularly for women, implemented by the PDPA government and defended by the Red Army. While saying next to nothing about the hideous barbarities routinely perpetrated by the Islamic reactionaries, who burned down schools and flayed teachers alive for the "crime" of teaching young girls to read, the ISO rails against the PDPA regime for its "ruthless brutality" and "arrogance and violence." Echoing Cold War lies about the Soviet Army targeting "entire groups" and "repressing resistance in a way that killed civilians," the ISO reaffirms the stand it took at the time—on the side of the Islamic insurgency against the Soviet intervention.

AP

During July 2008 visit to Jalalabad, then-presidential candidate Obama met with Afghan warlord Gul Agha Shirzai, governor of Nangarhar Province, who in early 1990s ran Kandahar as part of *mujahedin*'s bloody rule.

When then-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, in a vain attempt to appease the imperialists, withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, we denounced this as a crime against the Afghan and Soviet peoples. That betrayal by the Kremlin bureaucracy opened the road to *mujahedin* rule in Afghanistan and prepared the ground for

the counterrevolutinnary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state itself in 1991-92, a historic defeat for the proletariat and the oppressed around the wnrld. In 1992, the CIA-backed *mujahedin* marched into Kabul, opening up fnur years of horrific rule under a shifting "coalition" of warring fundamentalist factions that hrought the city to the point of famine and devastation. Many of the reactionary warlords who today control the provinces as flunkeys of Washington are veterans of that brutal regime.

According to the *New York Times* (28 January), Obama ollicials intend to "put more emphasis nn waging war than on development" and "work with provincial leaders as an alternative to the central government." One provincial warlord who caught Obama's eye is Gul Agha Shirzai, the governor of Nangarhar Province. Shirzai ran Kandahar in the early 1990s during the bloody rule of the *mujahedin*, when that province first emerged as Afghanistan's opium capital. When then-candidate Obama visited Afghanistan last July, he snubbed Karzai (saying the president had not "gotten out of the bunker"), meeting first with Shirzai, who was later invited to the inauguration festivities.

Bush/Obama's "War on Terror"

In Obama, the U.S. imperialist ruling class has gained an effective executive for pursuing its hloody aims abroad and its exploitation of working people at home. Thus, he is moving to clean up snme of the most blatant excesses in the "war on terror" while maintaining the underlying policy laid down by the likes of Dick Cheney, John Ashcroft and George Bush. Obama won plaudits from many liberal quarters, including the American Civil Liberties Union, for his promise to shut the CIA's secret prisons, halt military commission trials and close (within a year) the notorious prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuha. Yet Obama is a staunch supporter of the "war on terror"—which has served as the pretext for imperialist depredation abroad and the evisceration of democratic rights at home—including voting as a Senator for warrantless wiretapping and the renewal of the USA Patriot Act.

The headline of a *New York Times* (18 February) article by Charlie Savage pointed out that "Obama's War on Terror May Resemble Bush's in Some Areas." On February 9, the Justice Department rushed into court to announce it will continue the Bush administration's invocation of "state secrets" to prevent access to the courts for torture victims like Canadian citizen Maher Arar, and on February 11, it sought to block those seeking to end the NSA's wiretapping. As for the approximately 600 detainees at the U.S. Air Force base at Bagram in Afghanistan, the Obama Justice Department told a federal judge on February 20 that it "adheres to" the Bush administration's position that they (and, thus, the thousands held in Iraq as well) have no legal right to sue for their release.

Most significant is the Obama administration's endorsement of indefinite detention, a hallmark of police state dictatorships, which was the centerpiece of Bush's war on democratic rights. Savage pointed out: "In little-noticed confirmation testimony recently, Obama nominees endorsed continuing the C.I.A.'s program of transferring prisoners to other countries without legal rights, and indefinitely detaining terrorism suspects without trials even if they were arrested far from a war zone." While Obama's January 22 Executive Order on Guantánamo calls for a review to determine which detainees can be removed to other countries or prosecuted in U.S. courts, it also calls for "other disposition...consistent with the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States." In plain language, that means continued indefinite detention without charges or any recourse to the courts. While opining that it's "hard to imagine," White House counsel Greg Craig admitted that Obama could be "the first President of the United States

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AFP

Above: School in Pakistan's Swat Valley reduced to rubble by Islamic militants in January. More than 140 girls' schools have been destroyed in recent months. Below: February 12 protest against Taliban in Lahore, Pakistan. The following day, officials announced that two women were murdered by Taliban thugs in a northwestern town.

to introduce a preventive-detention law" (*New Yorker*, 23 February). We say: Immediate freedom for all detainees! U.S. out of Guantánamo!

Pakistan and Afghanistan: The Reactionary Legacy of Colonialism

Imperialists and their ideological spokesmen are increasingly voicing fear that the turmoil in Pakistan's western regions could lead to the disintegration of Washington's client state. The London *Guardian* (23 October 2008) expressed alarm at the "cycle of violence" that

> "threatens the very fabric of Pakistan, an unstable nuclear-armed state that at times appears on the very brink of unraveling. Were that to happen the consequences both for the country and the region would be unthinkable."

The U.S. imperialists are indeed playing with a bomb that could easily blow up in their faces.

Pakistan, like India, is a prison house of peoples, a legacy of three centuries of British colonial "divide and rule" in the region. That policy culminated in the partition of the Indian subcontinent by the British imperialists in 1947, unleashing the forced migration of millions of poor Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs accompanied hy communalist slaughter of indescribable savagery. During the partition, Punjab and Pakistan's Nnrth West Province were rent by murderous pogroms.

Pakistan's claim to constitute "one nation" of all Muslims masks the domination of the Punjabi ruling class over Baluchis, Pashtuns and other oppressed nationalities. The myth of "national unity" has been imposed through brutal repression carried out by the Pakistani military. For most of the years since Pakistan was created, it has been subjected to direct military rule. In addition, the borders arbitrarily drawn by the British imperialists and inherited by Pakistan deliberately cut across the territory of virtually all the nationalities. The purpose was to undercut their power to revolt while creating a legacy of conflict that could be manipulated at will by the imperialists.

A prime example is the Pashtuns, who inhabit territory that today covers much of southern Afghanistan and northwestern Pakistan. The border that divides them dates from 1893 when the British, smarting from the defeat of their second attempt to militarily subjugate Afghanistan, drew an arbitrary frontier through the mountains to demarcate Afghanistan as a buffer state between British India and tsarist Russia. The resulting Durand Line has been disputed by successive Afghan governments.

In turn, Islamabad has sought to use influence among Pashtun tribes to extend its influence in Afghanistan. According to Pakistani military doctrine this would provide "strategic depth" against the country's perennial foe, India. Today, amid the powers vying for influence in Afghanistan and Central Asia, Pakistan and India are playing their own version of the "Great Game," the 19th-century jockeying for advantage in Afghanistan hetween agents of Britain and Russia. Last month India completed a $1 billion highway in southwest Afghanistan linked to a highway in Iran, thus creating a route from the Indian Ocean to Kabul—and beyond it, to energy-rich Central Asia—that does not go through Pakistan. Islamabad worriedly views that project as "encirclement."

The high point of Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan came in 1996 when the Pashtun-based Taliban, with backing from the Pakistani ISI, drove the *mujahedin* regime out of Kabul. Five years later, when the Taliban was driven from power by U.S./NATO forces following the September 11 bombings, Islamabad was forced intn a contradictory posture of backing its imperialist patrons in Washington and their "war on terror," while seeking to maintain relations with fundamentalist forces ensconced in its western tribal regions. Just as the U.S. imperialists' backing of bin Laden against Soviet forces in Afghanistan ultimately came back to haunt them, so Islamabad today finds itself trying to tame a monster it helped create.

Pakistan is an example of uneven and combined development, reflecting the impact of imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation superimposed on an underdeveloped and backward society. In Pakistan, women are subjected to *purdah* (seclusion) and jailed or stoned to death for adultery and similar "crimes" under Islamic law or murdered in "honor killings" by their own families.

At the same time, Pakistan has a significant working class that has shown a determination to struggle. In the past years, there have been major strikes in several industries. In 2008, tens of thousands of workers at the Pakistan Telecommunication Company struck for several weeks, gaining a 35 percent pay raise and regularizing contract workers. There have also been strikes by textile, sugar mill and transport workers. Reportedly, thousands of health care workers struck throughout Pakistani-occupied Kashmir in mid-February.

The task of liberating all the exploited and oppressed of the Indian subcontinent demands the forging of Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties dedicated to the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisies in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and the establishment of a socialist federation of South Asia. Crucial to such a proletarian-internationalist perspective is the fight for workers political revolution in the Chinese deformed workers state, a fight that must be premised on the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and domestic counterrevolution. Only an internationalist perspective, uniting social struggle on the subcontinent with the fight for workers revolution in the U.S. and other advanced capitalist countries, can open the door to real social liberation for the impoverished masses. ■

Friends of Afghanistan Society

Afghan women militia volunteers mobilized against CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats. Spartacists hailed Soviet intervention, called to extend gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples.

Auto Bailout...

(continued from page 12)

time the capital of the UAW and a center of working-class black America, Detroit resembles New Orleans in the aftermath of Katrina; both disasters are the products of racist America's capitalist order. The current economic crisis will continue to throw millions of workers into the ranks of the unemployed.

In this context, the fight for jobs is equivalent to the fight against the devastation of America's working people. What is necessary is a massive program of public works at union wages to rebuild the dams, bridges and roads that are in an advanced stage of decay; to tear down and replace the crumbling public schools in the nation's inner cities; to create an America that looks like a place that its inhabitants could survive in. It is necessary to call an end to the layoffs by shortening the workweek at no loss in pay, as part of the struggle for jobs for all.

All must have full access to medical care at no cost and unemployment benefits must be extended until there are jobs, with all pensions completely guaranteed by the government. Such demands, the elements of which were laid out in the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, will not be granted by the rapacious capitalist rulers. The capitalist state exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed or wielded to serve the interests of working people. The catastrophe of joblessness, threatening the disintegration of the working class, can be effectively fought only by a workers movement led by those committed to the struggle for socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers government where those who labor rule.

While auto workers are in a precarious situation, people in the U.S. still require cars to get around, and the auto industry is vital to the military power of the U.S. imperialists. The American ruling class is not about to entirely shut down its domestic auto industry. Armed with a class-struggle program that is based on the understanding that the working class shares no interest with the bosses, a union with the power of the UAW could spearhead the fight against capitalism's ravages, including by enlisting support from the rest of the proletariat and the unemployed.

But Gettelfinger and his ilk in the top echelons of the American trade-union bureaucracy are not going to lead such struggle. Aptly described by the early American socialist Daniel De Leon as the "labor lieutenants of capital," these types share with their capitalist masters the belief in the inviolability of the profit system, a belief concretized by their integration into the capitalist Democratic Party. While it is possible, although unlikely, that these union tops may be moved to some militancy if their status is threatened, once that is secure they will again betray.

The UAW tops are so fixated on the company's bottom line that Gettelfinger has promised to grant Ford whatever concessions are given to GM and Chrysler and to work together with Obama to "rebuild" the auto industry. Last February, then-candidate Obama journeyed to the GM plant in Janesville, Wisconsin, with promises of federal aid so that "this plant will be here for another hundred years." Today, the plant is closing down, and President Obama is considering whether the auto bosses' "restructuring" plans contain sufficient concessions by the UAW. His auto industry task force is headed by Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, a former Wall Street financier and onetime head of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, who now insists that auto workers accept poverty wages.

It is time for the labor traitors, complicit in the gutting of the unions, to go. The road forward lies in building a class-struggle leadership in the unions to carry out the vitally necessary battles against America's bourgeois masters. This will be part of the forging of a multiracial revolutionary working-class party dedicated to the overthrow of decaying imperialism's world order.

seedetroit.com

Dilapidated buildings in Detroit. Plant closures and mass layoffs have devastated the city.

Organize the Unorganized! For International Working-Class Solidarity!

Each giveback to the bosses has fueled the withering of the UAW from its peak of 1.6 million members in the 1960s to well under 500,000 today, of whom less than 150,000 work for the Big Three. The trade-union tops give much lip service and little action to the crucial need to replenish the ranks of labor by organizing the unorganized. And a UAW that repeatedly rolls over is hardly attractive to the non-union worker.

But the current assault on the UAW threatens all workers in the industry, from the foreign-owned, non-union plants in the South to the offshore plants in Mexico and overseas. Historically, auto workers in non-union plants were paid more than the unorganized in other jobs as the bosses attempted to ward off the scourge of union organizing. Now, with the slashing of UAW wages and benefits to the level of those in the non-union plants, a race to the bottom has been set in motion, as the cutbacks at Toyota show. In going along with the concessions, the union tops are undercutting the elementary purpose of a union.

The trade-union officials place all their hopes to increase trade-union membership on the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), the card-check bill currently languishing in Congress, where the Democrats who promised their fervent support for the bill are in command. This supportable bill would allow workers to bypass the prolonged "secret ballot" procedures currently in place, during which the employers mobilize to crush pro-union sentiment (see "Why Marxists Support the EFCA," *WV* No. 929, 30 January). However, while strikes are not categorically proscribed by the bill, the trade-union bureaucrats signal their intent to avoid messy class struggle by having inserted in it the "right" to demand arbitration to secure a first contract after four months should the bosses prove obdurate during negotiations, thus seeking to beg favors from the capitalist state that they could not obtain from the bosses.

The recent bailout hearings give ample testimony to the fact that such hopes are a pipe dream, as is the notion that the EFCA would safeguard organizing against intimidation by the bosses. There will be no significant and lasting increase in union membership without class struggle. And that struggle cannot go forward without a fight against the forces that divide workers one from the other: anti-immigrant and anti-foreign-worker chauvinism promoted primarily by the union tops and their Democratic Party cohorts, and the race-color caste oppression of black people, which is the bedrock of capitalist rule in this country.

This is dramatically the case in the open shop South, where union organizing cannot go forward without linking the fight for black rights to labor's cause. In the southern tier of the U.S., the KKK and similar fascist organizations are historically the shock troops of anti-union reaction. Their ultimate aim is the destruction of the class organizations of the proletariat. Meanwhile, the anti-immigrant workplace raids by the Feds in the South and elsewhere have broken up union organizing drives. The union movement must unequivocally stand on the side of immigrant workers, who often bring traditions of militant trade unionism into labor's ranks, by demanding an end to the vicious deportations and by raising the banner of full citizenship rights for all immigrants. The fight for such demands will set the stage for the mobilization in common struggle of the workers in the auto plants in Mexico and elsewhere with auto workers in the U.S.

GM has manufacturing plants in 35 countries. The best measure of protection for auto workers in the U.S would be to up the pressure against China in the service of counterrevolution. He would sabotage the militant struggles of the Chinese proletariat against the encroachments of capitalism there, encroachments fostered by the venal bureaucratic caste running China, while bolstering the authority of the very American imperialists who are attacking working people in the U.S.

Albeit on different scales, both the UAW and the workers state in China are the fruits of historic victories for the proletariat. One resulted from the formation of industrial unions in the U.S. during the 1930s, the other from the expropriation of capitalist rule in the 1949 Chinese Revolution. Both must be defended unconditionally from attacks that seek to undo these gains, despite the fact that each is led by a bureaucratic layer that puts the gains in jeopardy. The bureaucratic misleaders of the trade unions here must be driven out of their positions of leadership and replaced by a class-struggle leadership committed to the overthrow of the American imperialist order through socialist revolution. The bureaucratic caste in China must be ousted by a proletarian political revolution in order to preserve and expand the working-class property forms established following the Chinese Revolution.

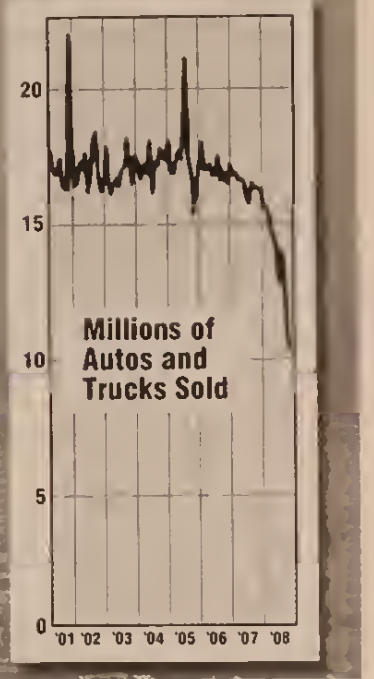
Reformist Nationalization Schemes

Besotted by illusions in the reform of the imperialist order are organizations like the International Socialist Organi-

Vehicle Sales in U.S. Plummet

(Seasonally adjusted annual rate, 2001-2008)

December 2008: Toyota vehicles pile up in Port of Long Beach, California.



WV Graphic based on chart by calculatedriskblog.com; Chart Source: BEA. Photo: Getty

zation (ISO) and Workers World Party (WWP) that dress socialism in the garb of a Swedish-style capitalist welfare state. For the ISO, it is only necessary to appeal to the chief of U.S. imperialism to nationalize troubled industries: "Why should the government hand over $15 billion in loans to incompetent executives when it could take over the auto companies outright for roughly the same amount of money—and put the workers who know them from the bottom up in charge of transforming the U.S. car industry?" (*Socialist Worker* online, 9 December 2008). For its part, the WWP writes in the 31 January issue of its paper, "It's time the union leadership advance the slogan of workers' control."

Nationalization of dying or bankrupt industries is a reform that has long been used by capitalist governments elsewhere to buy off working-class discontent and prop up failing enterprises. When Chrysler threatened bankruptcy in 1979, then-UAW head Doug Fraser drafted a tepid nationalization plan while at the same time pledging to exempt the company from strike action. Whether then or now, full nationalization would simply result in pay cuts, tax subsidies and import controls to make the auto plants profitable. In the end, Fraser settled for a bogus version of "workers' control"—a seat on Chrysler's board of directors—and proceeded to shove concessions down workers' throats, which did nothing to stop the hemorrhaging of jobs.

As we wrote in our article on the Chrysler bailout, "No Government Handout for Bosses! Whatever Chrysler's Worth—Give It to the Workers!" (*WV* No. 238, 17 August 1979): "The reformist practice of nationalizing only the *least* efficient capitalist operations is in a sense the exact opposite of socialist expropriation. Socialist economic planning is based precisely on appropriating from the capitalists the *most advanced* means of production." Furthermore, for Marxists, workers' control of production is an expression of dual power in industry during a revolutionary crisis. Otherwise, it is nothing more than a call for workers to force on themselves the same cost-saving measures as the bosses previously had. Thus, under WWP's framework, GM workers would soon see the "wisdom" of accepting near worthless company stock rather than cash to fund their retiree health care benefits, while those who labored at one of the ISO's nationalized companies would have such "solutions" imposed.

Both these reformist groups propose that the working class should be part of an amorphous (and nonexistent) people's movement that seeks to tame the capitalist beast. For the reformists, who play the part of waterboys to the trade-union bureaucracy, class struggle is to be considered only within the parameters sanctioned by the capitalist order.

Let Capitalism Perish!

The present crisis is not the first faced by a weakened American labor movement. Throughout the 1920s, the craft-based, pro-capitalist AFL union leadership did little to organize those millions of workers in American industry that did the backbreaking work in the open hearths and on the assembly lines. In the four years after the October 1929 stock market crash, unemployment skyrocketed from under 1.5 million to over 12 million, so that virtually any worker could be easily replaced. The working class was torn asunder, confronted not just by joblessness but with homelessness and starvation. By 1933, AFL membership was less than half of what it had been in 1920.

It is normal that at the beginning of a massive economic recession or depression the working class will be gripped by paralysis. In the case of the Great Depression, in 1933 the economy experienced a slight upturn. The next year, citywide strikes broke out in Minneapolis, San Francisco and Toledo, led by Trotskyists, the Communist Party and left-wing socialists, respectively. These strikes set the stage for a large-scale outpouring of class militancy. Workers turned en masse to the very unions that had disdained them to demand organization, prompting a wing of the lily-white AFL tops to form a committee empowered to organize industrial workers, which became the CIO. Once organized, the workers fought the bosses tooth and nail, sacrificing, if necessary, their jobs, their freedom and their very lives.

AP

Nagoya, Japan: Protest against layoff of temporary Toyota workers, 23 December 2008.

There is only one possible explanation for this turn to class warfare. The very conditions that grind down the working class, the same conditions that demoralize workers and set them one against the other in a fight to survive—that is, the capitalist mode of production—these same conditions also propel the working class toward unity in battle against its exploiters. As long as capitalism exists, it will generate the conditions that spawn class struggle. It is in the course of such sharp class struggle and through the instrumentality of a revolutionary party that patiently educates the working class in the understanding not only of its social power but of its historic interests that workers will become conscious of themselves as a class fighting for itself and for the oppressed against the capitalist order.

The gigantic class battles of the 1930s carried the American trade-union movement to unprecedented heights and set the stage for the further development of class consciousness in the working class, the most advanced elements of which were receptive to the idea of forming a workers party in opposition to the two capitalist parties. Leon Trotsky expressed the problem succinctly in "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" (1940): "In the United States the trade union movement has passed through the most stormy history in recent years. The rise of the CIO is incontrovertible evidence of the revolutionary tendencies within the working masses. Indicative and noteworthy in the highest degree, however, is the fact that the new 'leftist' trade union organization was no sooner founded than it fell into the steel embrace of the imperialist state. The struggle among the tops between the old federation and the new is reducible in large measure to the struggle for the sympathy and support of Roosevelt and his cabinet."

The very leaders of the new industrial union movement, including social democrats and the Stalinist Communist Party, crippled it through their support to Roosevelt's liberal bourgeois politics. Such links to the Democratic Party are the coffin for the aspirations of an awakened working class. It is urgently necessary to combat and defeat the reformist opponents of socialist revolution, to sever labor's ties to the Democrats and to build the revolutionary working-class party that will overturn the bloodsoaked U.S. imperialist order through socialist revolution. It is to this end that the Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, devotes all its resources. ■

Immigrants...

(continued from page 3)

anti-immigrant and pro-Democratic Party bureaucracies of both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win-affiliated trade unions. These pro-capitalist misleaders chain workers to their class enemy and prevent them from engaging in independent political action in their own class interest. For the unions to champion the cause of immigrants and the poor requires a political struggle to oust the trade-union bureaucracies and replace them with a class-struggle leadership that will mobilize the workers independently of and in opposition to the capitalist rulers.

The organized labor movement has by and large been criminally silent in the face of the racist killings of Marcelo Lucero and José Sucuzhañay. (In contrast, the rallies were literally crawling with local capitalist politicians anxious to channel the just outrage into impotent vigils and promises of justice at the hands of the government that persecutes these immigrants daily.) A notable exception came from 20 janitors of SEIU Local 32BJ who attended a protest in Long Island against the killing of Marcelo Lucero (*Militant*, 1 December 2008). To its credit, Local 32BJ issued a November 12 press release condemning the lynching. However, the statement sows dangerous illusions in the government of the class enemy by calling on Long Island's elected officials, "especially Steve Levy," to "work toward real solutions to fix our broken immigration system." Democratic Party politician Steve Levy is the arch-reactionary Suffolk County Executive who has for years spearheaded a vicious campaign against immigrants throughout the county where Patchogue is located.

No Illusions in the Capitalist State!

At protests and vigils in response to the racist murder of Lucero and Sucuzhañay, several fake-socialist groups showed up to peddle their program of trying to pressure the Democrats to defend immigrants. The International Socialist Organization (ISO), once again acting as the wagging tail on the Democratic Party dog, exhorts: "We should welcome [!] the news that Pelosi and other Democrats are questioning [!] the usefulness [!!] of federal raids" (*Socialist Worker*, 18 November 2008). In other words, the ISO has the audacity to hope that Obama and the ruling class of this irrational and murderous capitalist system will find more benevolent and "useful" ways to extract their pound of flesh from immigrant workers than through I.C.E.'s terror raids. The groveling reformists of the ISO perpetuate the reformist hoax that the workers can pressure the Democratic wing of the ruling class into serving the interests of the workers and oppressed. Such was the motivation behind the ISO's election night party in Harlem to "celebrate the end of far too many years of republican [sic] rule" and to discuss "what can activists do to press their demands on the next administration?"

The National Council of La Raza and the National Urban League, with the reformists of the Communist Party USA in tow, call for federal "hate crimes" legislation and specifically for passing the "Local Law Enforcement Hate Crime Prevention Act," (HR 1592). We are opposed to hate crimes legislation because such laws give the cops and courts added powers for repressing those who are truly in their cross hairs: blacks seeking to defend themselves against racist terror, antiwar protesters, union militants and leftists. The state is not neutral! It is an instrument of organized force and violence—consisting at its core of the police, army, courts and prisons—for maintaining capitalist property and profits through the suppression of the working class and the oppressed. It is a deadly illusion to expect protection from the very same federal government that is responsible for the Gestapo-like raids against immigrants, the brutal deaths of scores of immigrants locked up in America's jails and detention centers, the systematic torture of prisoners in Guantánamo and the imperialist slaughter in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We fight to win workers to the need for a class-struggle program that tears through the straitjacket of "national unity" promoted by the U.S. capitalist rulers and breaks down the poisonous racial and ethnic divisions they promote. The way forward was shown by the 9 February 2002 united-front protest initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee and the Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense in Oakland, California, that was called around the demands "No to the USA-Patriot Act and the Maritime Security Act! Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!" This protest, which included the participation of black ILWU longshoremen and Latino day laborers, was a real, if modest, demonstration in action in defense of immigrants and against government repression. We fight with a class-struggle program in opposition to the class collaborationism of the union bureaucracy and the racial and ethnic hostilities it foments that are a critical barrier to working-class consciousness and struggle.

In racist capitalist America the oppression of black people is endemic to capitalist exploitation, poverty and repression. Black workers, as the most experienced and conscious section of the working class, will play a vanguard role in the struggle to eradicate this outmoded capitalist order—the source of all social oppression. Full and equal rights for immigrants, gays, black people and other minorities, decent housing and jobs, free quality health care and education for all can only be achieved through a workers revolution that smashes the capitalist profit system and ushers in an egalitarian socialist society. Workers and minorities do not need a "lesser"-evil party of racist capitalism, whether Democratic or Green. What we need is a revolutionary workers party that, as champion of the cause of all the oppressed, will lead the class to sweeping away the capitalist system once and for all. ■

CORRECTION

In "Obama: Commander-in-Chief of Racist U.S. Imperialism" (*WV* No. 925, 21 November 2008), we misspelled the first name of Marcelo Lucero, the Ecuadorian immigrant killed by racist thugs on November 8, as Marcello. The correct spelling is Marcelo.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

UAW Tops Hand Over Hard-Won Gains

Auto Bailout Means Union Busting

With the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression growing worse, the liberal and not-so-liberal "friends of labor" in the Democratic Party—the Nancy Pelosis and the Barack Obamas—would have it that now is the time when *all* must sacrifice. For the capitalist masters of U.S. imperialism, whose anarchic system of production for profit wrought this disaster, "sacrifice" means possibly having to mothball a few corporate jets and forgo a bonus or two in return for receiving uncountable billions in bailout dollars. The real suffering is reserved for America's poor and working people, who face layoffs, slashed wages and benefits, homelessness and draconian cuts in public education, transportation and welfare.

Atop the agenda of the modern-day robber barons is making the members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) pay for the financial collapse of the Big Three auto producers. From the start, the drawn-out auto bailout proceedings have focused on how best to gut the union, which was forged in the giant class battles of the 1930s. The intent is to reduce the UAW—the union that once epitomized working-class power in this country, the union that for a brief historical period provided its members with something at least resembling a good life—to parity in poverty with the vast mass of unorganized workers in the private sector. Indeed, the companies will qualify for the bailouts only if they lay off tens of thousands of workers and slash benefits.

At the time of the first bailout hearings, we wrote: "We are opposed to the bailout of the auto bosses. A government bailout will be purchased through the further destruction of the jobs and livelihoods of working people" (*WV* No. 926, 5 December 2008). By the terms of last December's bailout proposal, co-drafted by Bush's Treasury Department, the Congressional Democratic leadership and the incoming Obama administration, the first step is in fact to reduce UAW members' benefits and wages to the level of those in the non-union, mainly foreign-owned U.S. auto plants. With UAW head Ron Gettelfinger playing the part of loyal lapdog to the bosses, you can forget the jobs banks and unemployment benefits at close to full pay, forget the pensions that make a decent retirement possible, and forget the good-paying job.

And now Gettelfinger has gone another step and helped to further endanger health care benefits for retirees and their spouses. On February 23, the UAW announced a deal with Ford to accept half the company's payments to a union-managed health care trust in the form of virtually worthless company stock, rather than cash. With Orwellian doublespeak, Gettelfinger triumphantly announced that this deal "will protect jobs for U.A.W. members"—even as the Big Three are shedding tens of thousands more jobs.

Reuters

Wood/Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Above: UAW president Ron Gettelfinger (second from left) flanked by auto bosses Richard Wagoner (GM), Alan Mulally (Ford), Robert Nardelli (Chrysler) at December Senate hearing. Right: Laid-off workers leave GM assembly plant in Janesville, Wisconsin, December 2008.

Two weeks before submitting the mandated "restructuring" plans to the government on February 17, the auto bosses at GM and Chrysler offered to buy out *all* their hourly employees, with GM offering a paltry $20,000 and a $25,000 voucher for a new car, while Chrysler is throwing in a few tens of thousands of dollars more. The purge of the current workforce will clear the way for the automakers to hire new workers at half the wages, $14 per hour, a concession granted by the UAW tops in the last contract. Saddled with a pro-capitalist union leadership that has for years put the "competitiveness" of the Big Three above all else, since 2006 about one-third of the UAW members at GM have opted to take previous buyout deals and leave the industry.

In the event of an auto workers strike to resist the bloodletting, the bailout deal would allow the Treasury Department to revoke the loans to GM and Chrysler, throwing the automakers into bankruptcy. Exactly: there is no real difference in impact between bailout and bankruptcy; either the workers will concede "voluntarily" or the bosses' courts will order them to do so. Fear that the companies may go under will be manipulated to intimidate workers into accepting devastating givebacks.

But whatever concessions Gettelfinger & Co. bring to the union membership for approval, the workers must vote them down. To vote for such terms would be to give up the sole advantage offered by unionization, the ability to collectively organize and fight to improve the lot of workers. Those few hard-won gains that remain today will be up for renegotiation tomorrow as the economy continues to go to the dogs. Not fighting will only assure greater misery in the future. The sharks of Wall Street and industry will not end their plant closings and layoffs until they feel assured they can turn a sufficient profit. The Great Depression had its ups and downs, but employment did not significantly improve until the Second World War, which America's rulers entered in order to cement their imperialist dominance, in the process mobilizing the working masses in the factories and on the battlefields.

The Fight Against the Devastation of the Working Class

Auto workers across the globe are under the gun. Sales in the U.S. and elsewhere have taken a nose dive, and company after company is contracting. Toyota is expecting to report its first annual loss in nearly six decades and, taking its cue from Detroit, has offered buyouts to some 18,000 workers in the U.S. while announcing wage cuts for those who remain.

The crisis in auto is an example of the anarchy and decay that reign in capitalist production in general, to which there is no simple trade-union solution. In their drive for ever-greater profits, the capitalist rulers have looted the wealth of this country and sabotaged its vital infrastructure by refusing to invest in and modernize basic industry like steel and auto. The deindustrialization of the U.S., under way for several decades, has only exacerbated the current crisis.

Black workers are especially at risk. The 1941 strike at the Ford's giant River Rouge plant in Detroit was a turning point in bringing black workers into the UAW and enabling it to become America's most powerful trade union. That was then. With all but a few auto plants in the Detroit area shut down for good, black male joblessness in the city hovers at 50 percent. The jails are overflowing and social services and the housing market have collapsed, with the *Detroit News* (23 February) reporting that the average sale price of a house in the city is $7,000. At one

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For Class-Struggle Leadership of the Unions!
For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 932 — GCU C-701 — 13 March 2009

Break with the Democratic Party of War and Racism!
For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Down With U.S. Imperialism!

U.S. Navy

AP

American forces landing in Helmand Province in Afghanistan, January 25. Barack Obama, imperialist Commander-in-Chief, addresses Marines at Camp Lejeune, February 27.

All U.S. Troops Out of Iraq and Afghanistan Now!

In February, President Barack Obama announced that he was sending an additional 17,000 U.S. troops, an increase of nearly 50 percent, to Afghanistan. This was followed by Obama's long-awaited pronouncement on a "withdrawal" from Iraq—a plan that would leave up to 50,000 troops as an occupation force for at least two more years. Meanwhile, the administration has stepped up U.S. military attacks on northwest Pakistan.

A number of liberal antiwar coalitions, which effectively went into hibernation when it was clear the Democrats had a shot at the White House a couple of years ago, have called for a march on the Pentagon (and in cities around the country) on March 21. The call for withdrawal of U.S troops from Afghanistan and Iraq is packaged by the protest organizers as a plea to Obama to fulfill his promise of "change." In fact, Obama is only carrying out what he promised as a candidate. From the start of the presidential campaign it was clear that he and the Democrats differed with Bush only on where, when and how to bring the jackboot of U.S. imperialism down on the backs of the oppressed masses throughout the world.

Doubtless, the various self-styled radical and leftist groups at the upcoming protests will be venting criticisms aplenty of Obama's policies. But their starting point is that this capitalist government, through pleading and pressure, can be made to carry out policies in the interests of working people and the oppressed. In fact, the various antiwar coalitions these groups have built over the years were all aimed at building a movement to put the Democrats in power, expressed in the overriding slogan, "Anybody but Bush!" In the lead-up to the presidential election, World Can't Wait, run by the Revolutionary Communist Party, screamed, "Drive Out the Bush Regime." The International Socialist Organization (ISO) enthused that the Democrats "are finally giving voice to the frustration" about the war (*Socialist Worker*, 4 May 2007). At a February 2007 rally for Obama at the University of Illinois-Chicago, ISO members were among the protesters who unfurled a banner that read, "Obama: Stand Up! Cut the Funding!" Can anyone imagine any of these groups now demanding, "Anybody but Obama"?

Whatever their rhetoric, all these self-styled socialists and their various liberal antiwar coalitions sought to lead protesters into unity with anything that passes for an "antiwar" Democratic politician. This was true of ANSWER, founded by the Workers World Party (WWP) but now run by their split-off, the Party for Socialism and Liberation; United for Peace and Justice, in which the ISO works; and World Can't Wait. Thus all these coalitions refused to raise the elementary call for military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against the U.S., which would have repelled Democratic Party politicians.

Having helped elect Obama with the implicit promise that the Democrats could be pressured into defending the interests of the oppressed, the reformists now seek ...to pressure Obama. Typically, *Socialist Worker* online (4 March) argues that "what Obama has shown us in the first weeks of his presidency is that we will get only as much as we fight for from this administration."

Our point of departure—and our conclusions—are diametrically opposed to those of the reformist "socialists." Marxists understand that war, poverty, recession and oppression are part and parcel of the capitalist system. Imperialism, as V.I. Lenin, leader of the Bolshevik Party that led the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, put it, is simply the highest stage of capitalism, marked by the domination of the globe by a small exclusive club of competing capitalist great powers. The scramble to leech the greatest profits possible out of the exploitation of working people is the root cause of wars of imperialist plunder and of the miserable conditions under which the overwhelming mass of the world's population lives and dies. Imperialist war is the concentrated expression of the normal brutal workings of the capitalist system, which daily

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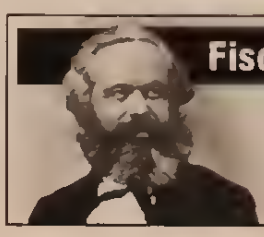

Fiscal Fiddling Can't Stop Depression

Marx vs. Keynes

See Page 4

Free Abortion on Demand!

Defend Dr. George Tiller!

After decades of intimidation and terror, courageous abortion provider Dr. George Tiller goes on trial March 16, threatened with *19 years* in prison. One of the few remaining physicians providing "late-term" abortions in the U.S., Dr. Tiller and the staff of his Wichita Women's Health Care Services have repeatedly been targeted by anti-abortion fanatics. Tiller's clinic was bombed in 1986, and in 1993 he survived being shot several times in an assassination attempt. Tiller faces 19 misdemeanor counts of violating the state's law requiring two doctors, without financial or legal ties to each other, to sign off on abortions done late in pregnancy (in Kansas, the arbitrary calculus of "late-term" is set at 22 weeks). Prosecutors claim that Tiller had a financial relationship with the doctor who provided a second opinion. These bogus charges are being used to railroad a courageous doctor who puts medical science and concern for his patients above his own well-being. The labor movement and all defenders of women's rights must stand in defense of Dr. Tiller and demand: Stop the witchhunt against George Tiller! Drop the charges!

The attack on Dr. Tiller is part of a drive, by legal and extralegal means, to intimidate abortion providers and ultimately do away with women's right to abortion. According to papers filed by Tiller's lawyers, the district attorney obtained under false pretenses a court order directing a Wichita hotel to turn over registration records containing patients' names. Under the pretext of investigating "child rape," these records were then matched with medical records that Tiller was required to submit to the state, in order to discover the names of Tiller's patients. D.A. Phill Kline, who launched the legal crusade against Tiller, was so frenzied in his campaign against abortion clinics that the state Supreme Court in December chastised him for showing "little, if any, respect" for "the rule of law" (*Topeka Capital-Journal*, 6 December 2008).

Nevertheless, on February 25 the judge in the criminal case against Tiller denied a defense motion to throw out prosecution evidence and refused to dismiss the case. Noting that the charges against Tiller had been filed by Kline's successor as attorney general, a "pro-choice" Democrat, the judge ludicrously concluded that Kline's actions "could not have tainted the investigation and prosecution of this case" (AP, 25 February).

The law being used to go after Tiller is just one of a slew of measures which have made abortion virtually inaccessible to a large number of women in this country. This is especially true for the young, working-class and poor, who already have limited access to decent health care, childcare, affordable housing or even enough food to feed their families. Today, 36 states prohibit abortions after a specified point in pregnancy. Fully 34 states

AP

require one or both parents of young women under 18 to be notified and/or consent to an abortion. And 87 percent of U.S. counties—*97 percent* in non-metropolitan areas—do not have an abortion provider.

Abortion is a politically explosive issue because it raises the question of the equality of women. This simple medical procedure provides women with some control over whether or not to have children. For this reason it is viewed as a threat to the institution of the family, which is a crucial prop for the system of capitalist exploitation. In order for safe and legal abortion to become a reality for working-class, minority and immigrant women, we call for *free abortion on demand as part of free quality health care for all*

The increasing curtailment of the right to abortion reflects the policies of both the Democratic and Republican parties. As we wrote in "Drop the Charges Against Dr. George Tiller!" (*WV* No. 924, 7 November 2008):

> "The reactionary demagogy of the Republicans is longstanding and obvious enough. But the fact is that there has been little 'choice' for poor women since Democrat Jimmy Carter (who now has become an international 'human rights' icon) signed into law in 1977 the Hyde Amendment eliminating Medicaid coverage for abortions. During Democrat Clinton's eight years in office, welfare for mothers was axed, safe access to abortion was effectively gutted across much of the country, as the number of abortion providers plummeted 14 percent between 1992 and 1996, and a huge number of restrictive laws were passed."

President Barack Obama provoked a

continued on page 10

Mexican State Seizes Transgender Woman's Daughter

We reprint below an article translated from Espartaco *No. 30 (Winter 2008-09), newspaper of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League.*

ESPARTACO

In 2006, the young Rosa Isela was taken from her home by the State Family Council (CEF) of the state of Jalisco, which is ruled by the neo-Cristero bourgeois PAN [Catholic clericalist National Action Party], and placed in a shelter run by nuns. Since then, her adoptive mother, Alondra Ávila, has been fighting to get her back. Why has the state ripped the child away from the person who has cared for her since 15 days after her birth? Because the CEF deems that the "conduct" of the transgender Alondra "does not fit within the elemental parameters of social coexistence for an underage person to have a moral reference point," which is a declaration of pure fanatical intolerance. *Full democratic rights for homosexuals and transgenders—for their right to adapt!*

Numerous people have spoken up in defense of Alondra's loving care of her daughter. Nine-year-old Rosa Isela has insisted that she wants to be with Alondra. A declaration before the DIF [National Agency for Family Development] of Tala, Jalisco, had established that custody of the child was given to Alondra. On 28 October 2008, the Seventh Family Court judge issued a ruling ordering the child to be turned over to Alondra immediately (apparently the first such ruling in Latin America), but the authorities did not inform Alondra and the CEF simply hid the girl! The neo-Cristeros who rule the country and the state of Jalisco could not care less about the well-being of children; it's about pushing their reactionary Catholic values.

The working class should fight for full democratic rights for homosexuals and other sexual minorities—all those whom the bourgeoisie's anti-sex religious moralism judges "deviant." The rights of homosexuals will only be fully attained through a workers revolution; bigotry against gays flows from the deeply rooted sexual stereotypes decreed by the sexual division of labor in the family, the source of women's oppression in bourgeois society, and is reinforced by the religious codes against "sin." Capitalist society needs the family, which is a conservatizing force and the mechanism through which private property is passed down. The family is a key prop of capitalist class rule, which can only be fully rooted out through the overthrow of capitalism.■

TROTSKY

LENIN

In Celebration of International Women's Day

International Women's Day originated in March 1908 when the mainly immigrant female needle trades workers marched in New York City to demand an eight-hour day and women's suffrage. A mass outpouring of women on International Women's Day in Petrograd in 1917 sparked the revolutionary upheaval that culminated in the Russian October Revolution—the greatest victory ever in the struggle for women's emancipation. In 1920, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin underscored the fact that the fight for women's liberation is an integral part of the fight for proletarian revolution.

The Soviet government is the first and only government in the world to have completely abolished all the old, despicable bourgeois laws which placed women in a position of inferiority to men, which placed men in a privileged position, for example, in respect of marital rights and of children. The Soviet government, the government of the working people, is the first and only government in the world to have abolished all the privileges of men in property questions, privileges which the marriage laws of all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic, still preserve.

Wherever there are landowners, capitalists and merchants, women cannot be the equal of men even before the law.

Where there are no landowners, capitalists or merchants, and where the government of the working people is building a new life without these exploiters, men and women are equal before the law.

But that is not enough.

Equality before the law is not necessarily equality in fact.

We want the working woman to be the equal of the working man not only before the law but in actual fact. For this working women must take an increasing part in the administration of socialised enterprises and in the administration of the state....

The proletariat cannot achieve complete liberty until it has won complete liberty for women.

—V.I. Lenin, "To the Working Women" (21 February 1920)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is March 10

No. 932 **13 March 2009**

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, March 19, 6:30 p.m.

Defeat U.S. Imperialism Through Socialist Revolution In the Belly of the Beast!

U.S. Troops Out of Iraq, Afghanistan!

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks E

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Wednesday, March 25, 7:45 p.m.

The Class-Struggle Road to Women's Liberation

For Free Abortion on Demand!

Hunter College, West Building
Room 407

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, March 18, 6:30 p.m.

Building a Leninist Vanguard Party

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Building, Room 1080
100 St. George Street

Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Thursday, April 2, 6 p.m.

The Deception of Capitalist Democracy

University of British Columbia
Student Union Building
Room 42T

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

Victimized After Building Occupation

Defend NYU Protesters!

We reprint below a February 21 letter to New York University president John Sexton and New York County District Attorney Robert Morgenthau by the New York Spartacus Youth Club in defense of protesters who had occupied NYU's student center for 40 hours starting on February 18. NYU reinstated the suspended students after one week, but they have reportedly been banned from "leadership roles" in student activities and will remain on disciplinary probation as long as they are at the university.

The Spartacus Youth Club condemns the reprisals against Take Back NYU! and all participants in and supporters of the occupation of New York University's Kimmel Center for University Life. We demand that no further reprisals be taken. Early Friday morning, NYPD officers attacked a solidarity rally held outside Kimmel, beating and pepper-spraying demonstrators. Two were arrested: Alex Deschamps, who has been charged with unlawful assembly, inciting a riot, resisting arrest, disorderly conduct and obstruction of government administration, and Jonah Calhoun, who has been charged with criminal possession of a weapon. We demand that all charges be dropped immediately! We protest the draconian suspension, banning from campus and eviction from their dorm rooms of the 18 students who were physically restrained and forcibly removed from Kimmel on Friday. These students face possible expulsion. Reinstate the students, now!

The attacks by the NYU administration, NYPD and campus cops on students expressing their solidarity with the Palestinian people, supporting collective bargaining for student workers (including TAs), and demanding an extremely modest limit on NYU's exorbitant tuition are an act of intimidation against any future protests. An administration already known for vicious union-busting has demonstrated yet again to the world its contempt for students, working people and the oppressed.

Zionism and Anti-Union Frenzy

York University, Toronto

We reprint the following article from the Young Spartacus *pages of* Spartacist Canada *No. 160, Spring 2009, published by the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.*

SPARTACIST CANADA

In the wake of the savage Israeli invasion of Gaza, campus activists and trade unions are under attack for their defense of the besieged Palestinians. On February 22, 120 Zionist thugs led by the fascistic Jewish Defense League besieged a Windsor conference of a committee of the Ontario division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). They brandished banners ominously threatening to "Terminate Sid Ryan," CUPE Ontario's president, for the union's pro-Palestinian stance. Days later, Tory immigration minister Jason Kenney escalated the Zionist witchhunt, calling on the union to get rid of Ryan and raving about "a very dangerous opinion environment for many Jewish students."

Toronto's York University is at the epicenter of the Zionist offensive on the campuses, which has seen both open repression and McCarthyite thought control of student and teacher activists. On February 11, the Zionist-led campus group "Drop YFS" held a press conference to promote their goal of deposing the York Federation of Students (YFS) on the grounds that it supported a recent strike by CUPE Local 3903, which represents teaching and graduate assistants and contract faculty. Rather than face criticism from leftist activists who sought to attend the press conference, the leaders of Drop YFS barred them at the door. Cancelling their own event, Drop YFS scurried straight into the office of the Hillel Zionists, scurrilously claiming they were intimidated by "anti-Semitic" leftists. A day later, when Students Against Israeli Apartheid (SAIA) held a pro-Palestinian demonstration on the campus, they were met by a mob of Zionists sporting Israeli Defense Force paraphernalia in a sea of Israeli flags.

Thompson/National Post

Canadian Union of Public Employees workers at York University during three-month strike that ended in January.

The Zionist witchhunt is completely intertwined with strikebreaking at York. CUPE 3903, whose leaders include well-known pro-Palestinian activists, has just come off the longest university strike in English Canadian history. Right-wing students organized anti-strike rallies on behalf of the campus administration and President Mamdouh Shoukri, as he hardlined against the union's modest demand to raise wages to a level closer to the poverty line. These reactionary students provided the provincial Liberal government ammunition to force an end to the strike.

On January 27, the teachers and their supporters protested against the Liberals' strikebreaking legislation. Toronto cops attacked their rally and arrested four people on bogus charges of assaulting police. Behind the pompous and regal ceremony of bourgeois democracy lies the armed violence of the cops against the working class. ***Hands off CUPE 3903! Drop the charges!***

Spartacist Canada

Trotskyist League at July 2006 Toronto protest against Israel's attacks on Lebanon, Gaza.

No Illusions in Canadian Imperialism!

CUPE Ontario's call for active labour support to Palestinian national rights marks a break with the pro-Zionist consensus that has historically dominated in the Canadian labour bureaucracy and especially the NDP [social-democratic New Democratic Party]. In standing with the oppressed Palestinians, the union has also slammed into the Harper government's uncompromising support for Israel as well as the ramped-up "war on terror" that targets the Muslim population for state repression. As we wrote when CUPE Ontario came under Zionist fire more than two years ago: "This is a frontal attack on the right of the labour movement to champion causes on behalf of the oppressed and an open invitation to union-busting by the capitalist state" ("Defend CUPE Ontario! Defend the Palestinians!" *SC* No. 150, Fall 2006).

Those leftists and trade unionists who rise to the defense of CUPE Ontario would be mistaken, however, to support its endorsement of the international "Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions for Palestine" (BDS) campaign against Israel. BDS activists here call on the same Canadian corporations that exploit workers at home and abroad and the same Canadian imperialist state that wages bloody war on the peoples of Afghanistan to come to the aid of the oppressed Palestinians by severing ties with Israel. In doing so, BDS fosters the worst illusions in capitalist Canada as a "peacekeeper" and a potential ally of downtrodden people.

In particular, the demand to boycott Israeli universities appeals to the supposed morality of Canadian academic institutions and funding bodies to break their links with the murderous Israeli regime. It speaks volumes about the liberal-reformist outlook of SAIA that during the teachers strike they begged York president Mamdouh Shoukri to uphold "values that York University cherishes most" (!) and "publicly condemn" Israel's attacks on a Gaza university.

Universities in Canada are no less attached to the Canadian state than Israeli universities are to the Zionist state. The governing bodies of York and the University of Toronto are rogues' galleries of the Canadian ruling class. No different from their Israeli counterparts, Canadian universities are run to benefit the capitalists, in the first place by training the administrative, technical and cultural personnel the capitalist system needs. This can range from the benign (high school math teachers, say) to the deeply malignant (military researchers, CSIS [Canadian Security Intelligence Service] operatives or "industrial relations" strikebreakers).

The multiple attempts to muzzle defenders of the Palestinians underscores this fact. Since the start of this year alone, Ottawa's Carleton University has taken the Orwellian measure of banning a poster that depicts a Palestinian child under a descending Israeli missile. University of Toronto president David Naylor personally intervened to block room bookings for a conference about Israeli Apartheid after a Zionist reactionary tipped him off. Now U of T's administration plans to send its thought police into pro-Palestinian meetings.

Unlike the liberal BDS campaign, the Spartacus Youth Club is for ***class struggle*** against the Canadian capitalist class and its agencies like the university administrations. For worker/student/teacher control of the universities! Abolish the administration! Students must look to the social power of the working class, the only social force capable of sweeping away capitalism worldwide and ending once and for all the genocidal terror against the Palestinians and all other oppressed nations.■

Fiscal Fiddling Can't Stop Depression

Marx vs. Keynes

The deepening economic crisis has meant the loss of jobs, homes and savings for millions of working people. It has also demonstrated the utter fallacy of the economic doctrine of monetarism, which maintained that economic crises could be minimized, if not eliminated, by adjusting the amount of money in the banking system along with interest rates. Monetarism was the gospel for bourgeois economists in the right-wing climate marked by the ascendancy of Ronald Reagan and Britain's Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 and the attendant "death of communism" triumphalism in the western imperialist countries, centrally the U.S., put more wind in the sails of the "free market" ideologues of monetarism.

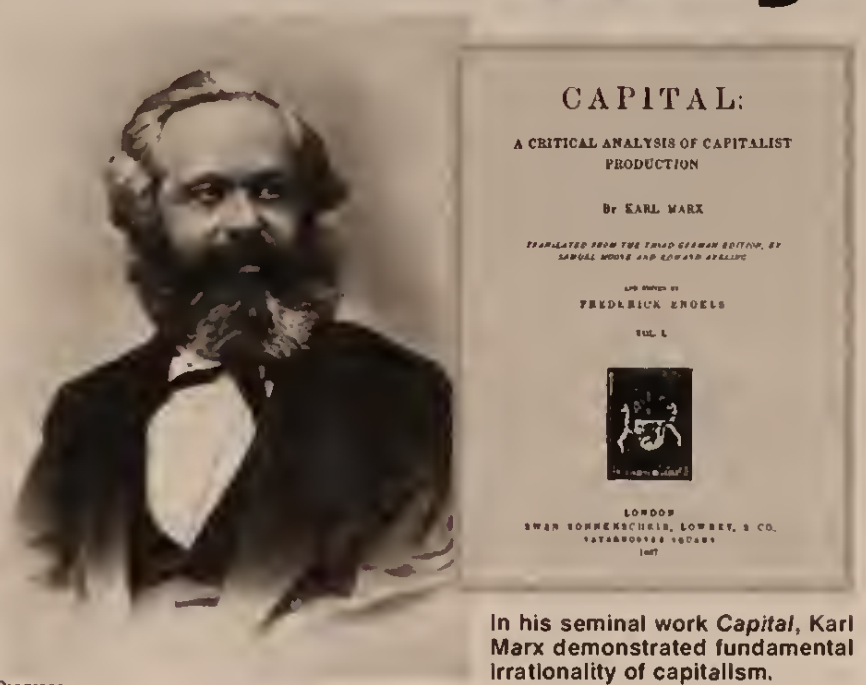
By Joseph Seymour

Today, with the monetarist myth in tatters, bourgeois economists have rushed to embrace the ideas of John Maynard Keynes, the British economist who, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, championed the notion that capitalist economic crises could be overcome through government deficit spending. That is the idea behind President Barack Obama's "stimulus" package, an expenditure of almost $800 billion financed by government borrowing that is supposed to "jump start" the economy. In reality, Keynesian economic schemes, no less than monetarist ones, run up against the destructive irrationality of the capitalist system, analyzed and explained by Karl Marx and highlighted by the boom-and-bust cycle.

The article reprinted below, first published in WV *No. 64, 14 March 1975, presents a Marxist critique of Keynes's economic theory.*

The current extremely sharp economic downturn has produced a wave of pessimism extending from the Stock Exchange and White House to the academic redoubts of bourgeois economics. While President Ford proclaims that unemployment will not drop below 8 percent again for another two years, the president of the American Economics Association, Robert A. Gordon, declares: "I don't think we have a body of economic theory that is of great help to use in today's world" (*Wall Street Journal*, 30 December 1974).

During most of the 1960s U.S. government economic policy was dominated by Kennedyesque "whiz kids" who claimed to be able to simultaneously hold down prices and stimulate investment through adroit manipulation of fiscal "levers." Now, however, with the onset of double-digit inflation and a slump of depression proportions, these claims are rapidly being debunked.



In his seminal work *Capital*, Karl Marx demonstrated fundamental irrationality of capitalism.

Progress

It was predictable that a world depression would lead to the collapse of optimism concerning Keynesian economic policies. The anti-Keynesian right (well represented in the Ford administration by the Ayn Randite Alan Greenspan and by former Wall Street bond dealer William Simon) had argued for years that government deficits must generate ever-increasing inflation, and now claims vindication.

Even the Keynesian liberals appear unsure of themselves, observing that the "trade-off" between inflation and unemployment has become most painful. Thus Sir John Hicks, one of the original architects of the "Keynesian Revolution," has recently brought out a book entitled, significantly, *The Crisis of Keynesian Economics*. And revisionist Marxists who had earlier written about the "relative stability of neo-capitalism" are now dusting off their copies of *Capital* and asserting that its venerable truths still haunt the capitalist world.

We are witnessing a notable intellectual convergence ranging from bourgeois reactionaries (Milton Friedman) to ostensible Marxists (Ernest Mandel), and including a number of liberals (John K. Galbraith, John Hicks, Abba Lerner): Keynesian economics, which supposedly "worked" for a generation, has now been overcome, they agree, by unprecedented global inflation and the worst crisis since 1929. Despite its widespread acceptance, however, this thesis is false. Keynesian fiscal policies never did, and never could, stop the cyclical crises of overproduction which are inherent in the capitalist system.

A major world slump as severe as the present one has been possible at least since the world recession of 1958. That such a slump did not occur before 1974 is due to contingent factors and not to the effectiveness of Keynesian countermeasures. For example, in 1967 the U.S. would have had a recession except for the expansion of the Vietnam War. Output actually did fall in the first quarter of that year and there was a 1967 recession in West Germany, then the second-largest capitalist economy. Without the sudden escalation of the Vietnam War, this conjuncture would undoubtedly have caused a world economic crisis, possibly quite severe. Only an idiot objectivist could deny this historic possibility.

The fact that a major world slump did not occur in the 20 years preceding 1974 is not due to credit inflation, an ever-increasing arms budget, Keynesian stabilization policies or any other deliberate government policy. There has been no fundamental change in the structure of postwar capitalism that would justify the various labels popular in liberal and revisionist Marxist theorizing—e.g., neo-capitalism, the mixed economy, the permanent war economy, etc.

Myths of the "Keynesian Revolution"

John Maynard Keynes was not responsible for developing or even for popularizing the policy that capitalist governments should increase their expenditures during an economic downturn, financing this through borrowing rather than increased taxation. This bourgeois reform measure has a long and respectable history going back to at least the 1890s.

Thus the minority report of the English Poor Law Commission of 1909 stated, "We think that the Government can do a great deal to regularize the aggregate demand for labour as between one year and another, by a deliberate arrangement of its work of a capital nature." In 1921 President Harding's Conference on Unemployment recommended expanded public works during the postwar downturn, a recommendation endorsed by such conservative organizations as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Moreover, in 1930 a bill was introduced into the U.S. Senate (No. 3059) calling for "advanced planning and regulated construction of certain public works, for the stabilization of industry, and for the prevention of unemployment during periods of business depression." This principle was incorporated into the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933, a half decade before the popularization of Keynesian economics.

What, then, is the significance of Keynesianism—why all the hullabaloo? While practical politicians had advocated and partly attempted expanded government expenditure during economic downturns, orthodox bourgeois economic theory (particularly in English-speaking countries) still held that slumps were easily self-correcting through a fall in the rate of interest. According to the textbooks, government policy during a downturn should be to expand bank reserves and run a balanced budget.

What Keynes did was to provide a theoretical justification, within the framework of bourgeois economic doctrine, for the deficit spending which most capitalist governments practiced in the 1930s, as well as in earlier slumps. The "Keynesian Revolution" was a revolution in university economics departments, in the writing of textbooks, not in actual government policy.

In the post-World War II period, capitalist politicians have claimed that the relative economic stability has been due to their effective use of Keynesian stabilization policies. This assertion—that capitalist governments can and do control the economy for the benefit of "the people"—is partly bourgeois propaganda and partly bourgeois false consciousness.

The notion that the proportion of government expenditure has increased greatly since World War II is so widespread that it is taken as a matter of course by virtually all political tendencies, including bourgeois reaction, Keynesian liberalism, social-democratic and Stalinist reformism, and revisionist "Marxism" à la Mandel. In truth, the supposed expanded role of state expenditure is the greatest of all myths of the "Keynesian Revolution."

It can be easily disproved by a few statistics which indicate government expenditure as a percentage of gross national product for the major capitalist powers during the interwar period (1920-39) and during the 1961-70 decade:

Country	1921-1939	1961-1970
France	14%	13%
Germany[1]	18%	16%
Great Britain[2]	21%	19%
Japan	10%	8%
United States	11%	20%

Sources: OECD, *National Accounts, 1961-1972*; U.S. Department of Commerce, *Long-Term Economic Growth, 1860-1970*; Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*; Stolper, *The German Economy, 1870-1940*; Maddison, *Economic Growth in the West*; Ohkawa and Rosovsky, *Japanese Economic Growth*.

[1] German interwar figures only cover 1925-39.
[2] British figures are based on national product net of depreciation, giving them a slight upward bias relative to the other countries.

Alfred Eisenstaedt

John Maynard Keynes (right) with U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau Jr. at 1944 Bretton Woods Conference.

These few figures utterly destroy the notion of a "Keynesian Revolution" involving major structural changes in the capitalist system following World War II. Only in the United States was there a significant rise in the level of government expenditure. In all other major capitalist countries, the weight of the state budget in the economy *declined* slightly. And the expanded role of the state budget in the U.S. is entirely accounted for by the greatly increased military expenditure required by the emergence of American imperialism as world gendarme in the postwar period.

Moreover, the relative weight of military expenditure in the U.S. has been steadily *declining* since the Korean War, except for the Vietnam War years. In 1954 (the year following the end of the Korean War) the military budget accounted for 11 percent of the U.S. gross national product (GNP); by 1965 (the year before the Vietnam buildup) the figure had fallen to 7 percent; and in 1973 military spending accounted for only 6 percent of GNP (*Economic Report of the President, 1974*). So much for the "permanent war economy" theory!

Marxism vs. Keynesianism

Before undertaking a Marxist criticism of Keynesianism it is necessary to indicate more precisely what it is that the latter asserts. According to the pre-Keynesian orthodoxy of bourgeois economics, a fall in the volume of investment that precipitated a slump would also free money capital, which in turn would enter the loan market and drive down the rate of interest. This fall in interest rates would then stimulate investment to the point that full employment of resources was restored. All the government had to do was to see that the crisis did not disorganize the banking system, i.e., to ensure that the mechanisms of credit expansion remained functioning.

Keynes accepted the theory that a sufficient fall of interest rates would restore a full-employment level of investment in a slump. His major work, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, is an attempt to explain why such a sufficient fall of interest rates does not occur. Keynes asserted that rentiers held some notion of a normal rate of interest. If the rate falls much below this, lenders will expect it to rise again, thereby producing a capital loss on bonds purchased at the lower rates. In a general sense, Keynesianism holds that at some abnormally low rate of interest (termed the "liquidity trap") lenders will hoard money in anticipation of higher rates in the future. This is less an explanatory theory than a description of the monetary aspect of a crisis/slump.

From these premises Keynes argued that government efforts to expand money and credit during a slump would be ineffective, producing simply money hoards and/or excess bank reserves. Therefore, he argued that increased state expenditures would have to substitute for inadequate capital investment. This, in a nutshell, was the "Keynesian Revolution."

In order to understand the difference between Marxist and bourgeois (including Keynesian) analyses of economic cycles, it is necessary to take account of a fundamental difference concerning the role played by the rate of interest. In bourgeois economics the level of investment is determined by the difference between the rate of interest on borrowed money capital and the rate of profit on the physical means of production. As long as the interest rate is substantially below the profit rate entrepreneurs will presumably borrow and invest until this gap is eliminated. A historical tendency for the rate of profit to fall, projected by many bourgeois economists (including Keynes), is not viewed as a fundamental barrier to expanded production. As long as the rate of interest is sufficiently low, a full-employment level of investment is supposedly assured.

In contrast, for Marx the level of investment is determined by the rate of profit on the privately owned means of production. The interest rate is part of and governed by the profit rate on the real means of production. During a slump, despite abnormally low rates of interest, loanable capital remains unused. Thus Marx referred to "the phase of the industrial cycle immediately after a crisis, when loanable capital lies idle in great masses" (*Capital*, Vol. III, Chapter 30).

The validity of the Marxist position was demonstrated during the late 1930s when excess bank reserves (an index of the difference between actual loans and the legally authorized lending capacity) were at the highest level in U.S. history, in spite of the unusually low interest rates. The exact same phenomenon is occurring in the present depression. Bank deposits in the U.S. are now declining at an annual rate of 0.6 percent as bank loans fall, although the falling interest rates are now even lower than the rate of inflation (*International Herald Tribune*, 15-16 February). The expansion and contraction of credit is a passive *result*, not a cause, of changes in production.

Bettmann

Above: A Hooverville in Seattle, 1934. These shantytowns, sarcastically named after Herbert Hoover, U.S. president at beginning of Great Depression, sprang up throughout America. After first few years of Depression, there was an upturn in class struggle. Below: Teamsters and their supporters repel strike-breakers and police during Trotskyist-led Minneapolis strike in 1934.

Minnesota Historical Society

Underlying the analytical difference over the role of credit and interest between bourgeois and Marxist economics is the concept of class. In bourgeois economics there is no capitalist class. Instead, atomized non-capitalist entrepreneurs borrow from equally atomized rentiers, using the funds to establish productive enterprises. Entrepreneurs and rentiers are linked solely through the rate of interest.

According to Marxism, however, the capitalist class is a definite concrete group composed of those who own and have a monopoly over the means of production (including loanable capital). The capitalist class is bound together by innumerable personal, familial and organizational filiations; the atomized non-capitalist entrepreneur—the central figure of bourgeois economic theory—is a fiction. The capacity to borrow is strictly limited by one's ownership of the capital assets required for security against loans. In reality, credit under capitalism is always rationed, on the basis of specific monopoly complexes involving financial, industrial and commercial capitalists. The clearest example of this is the Japanese *zaibatsu* system, but the same phenomenon holds throughout the capitalist world.

From the Marxist standpoint the fundamental fallacy of Keynesian economics is the assertion that the expansion of the government sector will leave the rate of profit, and therefore the level of private investment, unchanged. Whether financed through borrowing or taxation, government expenditure constitutes overhead costs of the capitalist system—a part of the total social capital expended and replaced, denoted by "constant capital" in Marx's equation for the components of the commodity product. (For a fuller discussion of this question, see "Myth of Neo-Capitalism," *RCY Newsletter* No. 10, January-February 1972.)

Assuming, as Marx did, that the share of wages of productive workers (variable capital) is determined in the labor market, then an increase in government overhead costs (constant capital) must *reduce* the potential surplus value and therefore the rate of profit as well. A constantly expanding government sector would tend to drive down the rate of profit, progressively arresting private capitalist investment.

The Limits of Mattick's "Mixed Economy"

Published in 1969, Paul Mattick's book *Marx and Keynes*, which carries the more indicative subtitle, *The Limits of the Mixed Economy*, accepts the common revisionist/reformist/liberal view that for a certain historic period Keynesianism produced "prosperity":

> "Government induced production may even bolster the rate of economic growth. Conditions of 'prosperity' more impressive than those brought forth under laissez-faire conditions may arise.... At any rate, recent economic history has demonstrated the possibility of a 'prosperous' development of a mixed economy."

However, Mattick at least makes a serious attempt to develop the internal contradictions of Keynesian economic policy and holds that increased government expenditure must eventually destroy capitalist stability:

> "Once non-profit production becomes an institutionalized part of the economy, a vicious circle begins to operate. Government production is begun because private capital accumulation is diminishing. Using this method diminishes private capital accumulation even more; so non-profit production is increased... The limits of private capital production are thus, finally, the limits of government induced production."

The most orthodox of the various revisionist theoreticians of postwar capitalism (e.g., Mandel, Paul Sweezy, Michael Kidron), Mattick is the most grudging in giving ground before the claims of Keynesianism. In contrast to Mandel and Sweezy, Mattick's work has the virtue of recognizing that expanded government expenditure drives down the rate of profit on private capital and therefore inhibits productive investment. However, Mattick would have been more consistent with Marxist economics if instead of treating government expenditure as a non-profit component of surplus value he treated it as a subtraction from the gross value of output, in the form of constant capital expended and replaced.

Mattick's work is a partially correct explanation of why those capitalist countries bearing a heavy burden of government expenditure (the U.S., Great Britain) have grown much slower than those economies with a relatively limited state sector (Japan, France). Yet his theory cannot explain the onset of a major world depression, nor does Mattick project such a development. The logic of his theoretical model is for progressive stagnation, not a general world slump.

According to Mattick's model, a sharp fall in private investment such as occurred in 1974 should have been preceded and caused by a sharp rise in the share of government expenditure. But this did not at all happen during the 1972-73 boom. The share of government outlays in the advanced capitalist countries remained virtually unchanged during that period, as can be seen from the following figures:

Government Expenditures as Percentage of GNP

Country	1971	1973
France	12%	12%
Japan	9%	9%
United States	22%	22%
West Germany	17%	18%

Source: OECD, *Economic Outlook*, December 1972 and December 1974.

Thus even at the empirical level it is indisputable that the current world economic crisis cannot be attributed to the limits of Keynesianism, at least not in the sense of intolerably large government expenditure relative to private capitalist production.

The Mandelian School of Falsification

In "The Generalized Recession of the International Capitalist Economy" (*Inprecor*, 16 January 1975) Ernest Mandel, theoretician-leader of the pseudo-Trotskyist United Secretariat, attempts a major analysis of the world conjuncture. The article begins with a statement of self-praise to the effect that the author, unlike many others, always rejected the idea that Keynesian economic policies could stabilize capitalist industrial cycles:

> "While the recession may be a surprise to all those in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois circles and in the workers movement who had been taken in by the claim that the governments of Capital endowed with neo-Keynesian techniques would henceforth be in a position to 'control the cycle,' it was foreseen and

continued on page 6

Keynes...

(continued from page 5)

> predicted by our movement, almost to the date."

And who are these unnamed figures in the workers movement who believed—oh, how naively—that "neo-Keynesian techniques" could "control the cycle"? Perhaps Mandel is referring to the author of the following excerpts from a well-known book on Marxist economics published in 1962:

> "Since the Second World War, capitalism has experienced four marked recessions: in 1948-49, 1953-54, 1957-58, and 1960-61. It has had no grave crisis, and certainly nothing of the dimensions of 1929 or of 1938. Have we here a new phenomenon in the history of capitalism? We do not think it necessary to deny this, as certain Marxist theoreticians do.... The origins of the phenomenon are connected with all the features of the phase of capitalist decline which we have listed. The capitalist economy of this phase tends to ensure ***greater stability*** both of consumption and of investment than in the era of free competition, or than during the first phase of monopoly capitalism; it tends toward a reduction in cyclical fluctuations, resulting above all from the increasing intervention of the state in economic life." [emphasis in original]

What is this supposedly Marxist work which claims that state intervention has ensured "***greater stability***" and "a reduction of cyclical fluctuations"? It is entitled *Marxist Economic Theory* (the excerpts are from Chapter 14) and is written by one Ernest Mandel.

To be fair to Mandel, it should be noted that he always hedges his bets. He has not completely rejected the efficacy of Keynesian countercyclical measures. Buried in the *Inprecor* article is a statement that governmental intervention can arrest and reverse the present world economic crisis:

> "The recession is precisely a crisis of overproduction whose breadth and duration are limited by an injection of inflationary buying power. Thus, if the economy is refloated by means of such injections—first of all in West Germany, then in the United States and Japan—the international capitalist economy will avert a grave depression this time."

If this were possible, one wonders why the capitalist governments have let things go so far.

Despite his usual fine-print escape clauses, Mandel's latest contribution is a dishonest repudiation of the analysis of contemporary capitalism expressed in his principal writings during the 1960s. Having served its purpose as an impressionistic justification for opportunist policies of adaptation to the labor bureaucracy, "neocapitalism" has now been discreetly removed from the Mandelian vocabulary.

A Professional Impressionist Views the Conjuncture

Having "disappeared" his belief in the efficacy of Keynesian stabilization policies, Mandel resorts to various ad hoc theories to explain the present conjuncture. His central theme is why there is a *world* crisis now, whereas during the past 20 years the various national slumps (sometimes severe) were largely isolated in time from one another. As Mandel puts it:

> "The generalized recession will be the most serious recession in the post-war period, precisely because it is generalized. The lack of synchronization of the industrial cycle during the 1948-68 period reduced the breadth of recessions."

It is an indisputable empirical fact that since the 1958 recession (not since 1948 as Mandel contends), the various national economic downturns have not reinforced and have partly offset each other. This statement can be transformed from an empirical description into a causal theory only if it is asserted that the absence of conjunctural synchronization was not due to contingent factors, but rather was inherent in the structure of postwar capitalism (at least until recently). This is precisely what Mandel now seeks to demonstrate:

> "This synchronization is not an accidental feature. It results from deeper economic transformations that occurred during the long period of expansion that preceded the recession."

Mandel advances three reasons to support this thesis. The first is that the world economy in the 1950s-1960s was not sufficiently integrated (!) to permit a generalized crisis. But during that period, the world economy became sufficiently integrated, particularly due to the expansion of multinational firms:

> "Internationalization of production took new leaps forward, marked by advances in the international division of labor among all the imperialist countries. From the standpoint of the organization of capital, this reflected itself in the rise of multinational firms which produced surplus value in a great number of countries simultaneously...."

Apparently it really is necessary to point out to Mandel that the world economy has been sufficiently integrated to generate international crises/slumps for more than a century! The principal basis of that integration is world commodity trade and its associated complex of financial claims. The principal "multinational firms" which extract surplus value in a "great number of countries simultaneously" are today, as they have been for centuries, the great banks, not industrial corporations.

World crises are marked and intensified above all by major bank failures, the Austrian Credit-Anstalt in 1931, Bankhaus Herstatt in West Germany and Franklin National Bank in the U.S. in 1974. The partial displacement of banks by industrial firms in financing international trade and investment has a certain effect on present-day capitalism. But it certainly does not qualitatively raise the level of international economic integration, permitting world economic crises for the first time.

Mandel's second reason is that the displacement of the dollar exchange standard by managed fluctuating rates in 1971 has prevented competitive devaluation, thus requiring simultaneous deflationary policies:

> "...as soon as the collapse of the international monetary system led to the system of floating exchange rates, that is, as soon as it became impossible to resort to sharp devaluations to boost exports, *all* governments were obliged by interimperialist competition to apply an antiinflationary policy *simultaneously*." [emphasis in original]

This argument is simply false, totally wrong. The fixed exchange rate system set up at Bretton Woods in 1944 was deflationary and acted as a limit to deficit spending. Several prominent British Keynesians, such as Roy Harrod and James Meade, long advocated fluctuating exchange rates in order to pursue more expansionary monetary and fiscal policies.

Before August 1971 competitive devaluation was exceptional, to be used only *in extremis*; today it is the rule. During the 1950s and 1960s governments often resorted to deflationary measures to protect an overvalued exchange rate (for instance, the policies of the second Eisenhower administration, the austerity program of the early Gaullist regime and the "stop-go" policies of various British governments before the 1968 devaluation of the pound).

Mandel's third reason is that since periods of national economic slump are becoming longer they are more likely to overlap with recessions in other countries:

> "The phases of stagnation, and even recession, are beginning to be longer. Obviously, this leads to synchronization. When they occur in a dozen countries at once, recessions that last six months are less easily surmounted than recessions that last two years."

This is, of course, a statistical truism. However, since the prolongation of an economic crisis in one country is strongly influenced by simultaneous slumps in the rest of the world, Mandel's reasoning is completely circular. Thus his third "reason" is no reason at all but simply another way of describing a general world downturn.

In short, of Mandel's three reasons why a general world slump is occurring now but was not possible in the preceding period, the first is irrelevant, the second is false and the third is meaningless.

Is Inflation the Achilles Heel of Keynesianism?

Virtually all liberal bourgeois, reformist and revisionist economists maintain that the only obstacle to effective Keynesian policies is inflation. Expanded government expenditure can always produce full employment, they say, but sometimes only at the cost of intolerable rates of inflation. From bourgeois reactionaries like Milton Friedman to the pseudo-Marxist Ernest Mandel there is agreement that Keynesian policies must generate ever-higher levels of inflation. Is this contention valid?

The accelerated inflation of the past few years is an indisputable empirical fact. In the period 1961-71 consumer prices in the advanced capitalist countries increased at an annual rate of 3.7 percent; in 1972 this rose to 4.7 percent, in 1973 to 7.7 percent and in 1974 to 14.1 percent (OECD, *Economic Outlook*, December 1974)! Is this accelerated inflation an inevitable result of 20 years of Keynesian policies?

Earlier in this article it was pointed out that the share of government expenditure did not increase during the 1972-73 boom. Thus the price explosion during the past few years cannot be attributed to ever-greater budget deficits to finance ever-greater government spending. The very sharpness of the price increases since 1971 argues against the theory that it is an organic, inevitable outcome of a generation of deficit spending.

What then is the cause of the increased inflation of the past three years? One major cause has already been touched on. The dollar exchange standard, which collapsed in August 1971, had an effect partially similar to the pre-World War I gold standard. The maintenance of a fixed exchange rate served as an external limit to the expansion of domestic money and credit. Since 1971 capitalist governments have taken the "easy way" out of balance-of-payments deficits by allowing their currencies to depreciate. Exchange-rate

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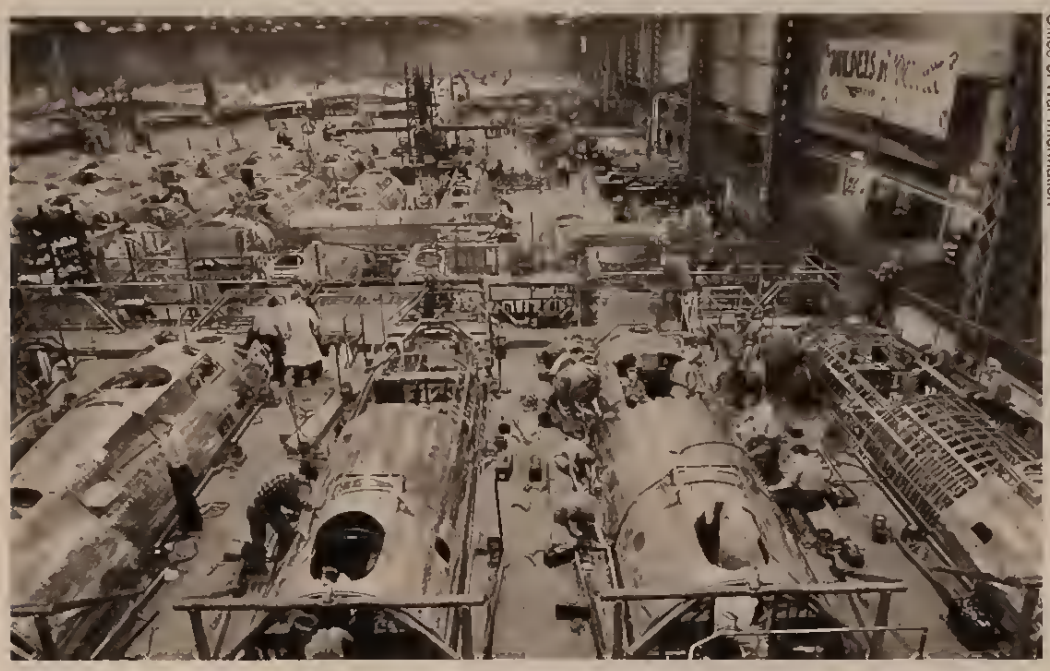

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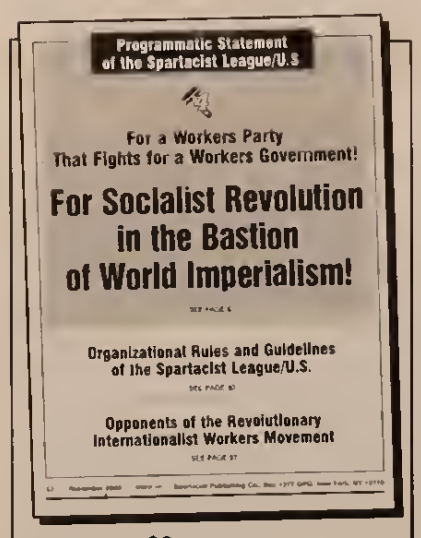

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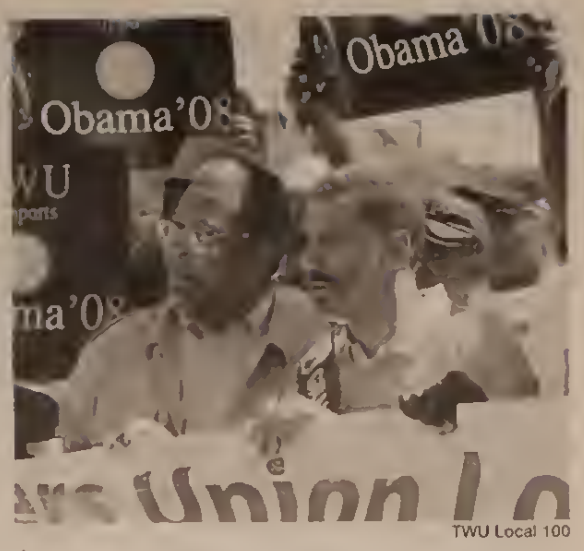
LRP Squirms Over Its "Critical" Support to Toussaint



TWU Local 100

LRP Leaflet, 19 Oct. 2000

VOTE FOR NEW DIRECTIONS — BUT DON'T TRUST THEM FOR A SECOND!

Despite New Directions's conservative electoral approach, workers are so fed up with the current

Transport Workers Union Local 100 president Roger Toussaint (left) with New York Democratic governor David Paterson at West Indian Day Parade in Brooklyn, September 2008. LRP called for vote to pro-capitalist New Directions/ Toussaint slate in 2000 union elections.

In the article "TWU Local 100 Tops Sign No-Strike Pledge" (*WV* No. 926, 5 December 2008), we drew attention to the class collaboration practiced by various left-talking labor fakers in Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100, especially the supporters of the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP), who distribute *Revolutionary Transit Worker* (*RTW*). Despite their occasional militant posturing, these self-described socialists practice rank trade-union opportunism. Squealing like stuck pigs because we exposed their accommodation to the union tops' fealty to the Democratic Party and other betrayals, the LRP posted online a "Response to Spartacist Slanders about *RTW*" (2 January).

The LRP/*RTW* hides the fact that in 2000 it urged transit workers to vote for Roger Toussaint in his successful bid for local president on the New Directions (ND) "opposition" slate. Their support for Toussaint, albeit with some empty criticisms, reflects an underlying programmatic agreement with the trade-union bureaucracy, which chains workers to the capitalist system, largely by preaching reliance on the Democrats. That's why LRP/*RTW* supporter Eric Josephson ran for a mid-level local union post last spring on a program that did not breathe a word against the Democratic Party, much less the union's endorsement of Barack Obama. The TWU bureaucracy was pulling out all the stops to get out the vote for the Democrats at the time.

The counterfeit "Marxists" of the LRP and sundry reformists make a practice of braintrusting and giving left cover to one or another wing of the trade-union bureaucracy, thereby further strengthening the hold of the Democratic Party on the working class. The LRP's backing of the union-suing, pro-capitalist ND caucus is one glaring example. When he was pushing votes for Toussaint, Josephson acknowledged in a 19 October 2000 leaflet that "the program which ND is really enthusiastic about is, of course, filing lawsuits." But Josephson and the LRP concluded: "Despite our differences with ND, we stand with our co-workers' desire for a new Local leadership. We will support ND."

For the LRP, bringing the capitalist courts into the unions is *not* a matter of principle. In typical slimy fashion, they have asserted: "Revolutionaries cannot absolutely rule out that there may arise exceptional and extreme situations under which using the courts in a union struggle may be necessary" (*Proletarian Revolution*, Summer/Fall 1998). It is class treason to use the courts or other government agencies against rivals in the union. Doing so only serves to shackle the power of the union and place it under the thumb of the capitalist state. Labor must clean its own house!

This same appetite was revealed following the 2005 strike, when Josephson enthusiastically helped build a "Vote No Coalition" of all manner of Toussaint's opponents, most of whom were onetime ND members and Toussaint supporters. Addressing the LRP's strike article in *Proletarian Revolution* (Winter 2006), we wrote: "The article includes not one word of criticism of Josephson's bloc partners—not on their history of supporting ND and suing the union, not on [then-Local 100 executive board member Ainsley] Stewart's opposition to the strike. Not only that, it calls for extending the 'united front,' aiming for the union's elections this fall—i.e., they want a warmed-over version of New Directions" (*WV* No. 863, 3 February 2006).

Before, during and after the strike, *WV* denounced the policies of the Local 100 leadership as a whole and put forward a class-struggle strategy. The leaflet that we distributed to striking workers called for a fighting alliance of all the unions at the head of the oppressed, combated illusions in the Democrats, cops and courts, and urged the organization of elected strike committees as against the policies of both the Local 100 and the TWU International tops (see "Victory to the Transit Workers Strike!" *WV* No. 861, 6 January 2006).

So why does the LRP howl that we "failed to criticize Toussaint's mishandling of the 2005 strike while it was going on" and claim that we now give the Local 100 president "backhanded support, in the name of defending the union"? Like typical trade-union opportunists, the LRP fixates on Toussaint as an individual, rather than the class-collaborationist program that he represents, in order to bloc with anti-Toussaint bureaucrats who share the same politics. During the strike, the LRP joined a chorus of disgruntled elements in

WV Photo

TWU workers on the picket line at Manhattan's Clara Hale bus barn during December 2005 NYC transit strike.

going after Toussaint, who was the main target of the capitalist rulers' attempt to divide and isolate the union through racist vilification of its elected leader. We did not denounce Toussaint by name in the midst of this class battle, even as we counterposed a class-struggle program to the class collaboration of the local leadership.

The LRP was playing to the same "anti-Toussaint" elements with its "amnesty" plan to grant full union and voting rights to backward workers who had stopped paying union dues. The capitalist rulers' vengeful effort to bankrupt the union in the wake of the strike by levying heavy fines against the union and its members and by taking away dues checkoff did in fact inflict real hardship on the union and its membership. But the answer to that is not to coddle backward workers or to appeal to the employers to retake control of dues collection.

The LRP quotes from a 22 August letter to the *Chief-Leader* by *RTW* supporters calling on Toussaint to "publicly, loudly, urgently and continuously wage the legal case for restoration" of dues checkoff, which was revoked by the capitalist courts in retaliation for the 2005 strike. Earth to LRP: dues checkoff means the bosses control union finances. For the labor bureaucrats, dues checkoff reflects a desire to live in "harmony" with the class enemy and allows them to evade the responsibility of facing the membership to collect dues. The logic of making the bosses the union's banker is to undermine the capacity of the union to strike. In fact, dues checkoff was restored last November after Toussaint pledged never to strike again. As we wrote in our December 2008 article, "With Toussaint's no-strike pledge, *RTW* got what it wanted."

The dues checkoff is an example of the tendency for trade unions in the absence of revolutionary leadership to become entwined with the capitalist state. In NYC transit, dues checkoff originated with a rotten deal between TWU leader Mike Quill and Democratic Party mayor Mike O'Dwyer in 1948. Facing a restive membership after enforcing a World War II no-strike pledge, Quill disavowed the union's historic opposition to transit fare hikes in return for a backroom deal granting modest wage hikes and dues checkoff.

We oppose dues checkoff and advocate union control of finances and dues collection by elected union reps. However, we opposed the state's use of the slave-labor Taylor Law to take away dues checkoff—we defend the unions against all capitalist attacks. It falls on the union membership to get rid of dues checkoff as part of the fight for a class-struggle union leadership.

The Toussaint leadership used the post-strike dues crisis to silence its opponents and critics within the union, removing a number of elected officers based on trumped-up charges. In late September, for example, Eric Josephson was bureaucratically removed from his post as a Track Division Vice Chair. The class-collaborationist TWU tops can aim such attacks against any worker who gets "out of line." We demand Josephson's reinstatement and defend victimized union members against bureaucratic attacks and violations of workers democracy.

Having repudiated the union's right to strike, Toussaint voluntarily submitted the Local 100 contract to binding arbitration just days before its January 15 expiration this year. The arbitration panel is not "neutral" but rather is a tool of the bosses and stacked against labor's interests. Transit workers can rely only on their own independent strength and organization and must oppose traps like arbitration. These are tough times for the working class. But not fighting will only ensure greater misery in the future. It is necessary to mobilize union power to fight for your jobs and your livelihoods, to stop attacks on pensions and health care, to oppose service cuts and fare hikes.

Time and again, the LRP tramples on the elementary principle of complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions from the bosses and the agencies of the capitalist state. Pandering to illusions in the new U.S. imperialist Commander-in-Chief, the LRP looks forward to "struggles to put Obama to the test of demands that he address the working class's needs" in a flyer distributed to a large NYC union rally on March 5. In fact, the Obama administration has already moved to break the power of the United Auto Workers through the so-called bail-out package and is gearing up to impose savage austerity on workers, blacks, minorities, immigrants and the poor.

This whitewashing of the representatives of the class enemy goes hand in hand with the LRP's lining up against the Soviet Union and the bureaucratically deformed workers states from the Cold War to the present. This outfit cheered capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR. Just as we defend the unions, despite their pro-capitalist misleaders, against the employers, genuine Marxists defended the Soviet Union, and today we defend the remaining deformed workers states of China, Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam, despite their Stalinist misleaders, against imperialist attack and capitalist restoration. In spitting on the workers states, which embody historic victories of the international proletariat abroad, the LRP is in no position to defend the organizational gains of workers struggle at home: the trade unions. Our task is to break the working class from the "lesser evil" Democratic Party of racist U.S. imperialism, to forge a class-struggle union leadership, and to build a revolutionary workers party capable of leading the working class in a struggle for power.■

Milk...

(continued from page 12)

the bounds of the capitalist courts and the ballot box is fully in keeping with the politics of *Milk*, which represents quite accurately the fulsome confidence in capitalist democracy that Harvey Milk pushed. With the election of the first black president, Barack Obama, the American ruling class is hoping for an extended honeymoon of race, class and social peace, while refurbishing illusions in American imperialist democracy. *Milk* is "the first openly Obama-iste movie," quipped the *Village Voice*. *Slate* agreed: "Few reviewers will miss the opportunity to point out—the parallels are hard to ignore—that Harvey Milk was the Barack Obama of his day, a minority candidate who represented change, opposed the party machine, and preached the gospel of hope." Not to be outdone, the *New York Times* reviewer wrote: "This is how change happens. This is what it looks like."

Sure, that's what they want the exploited and oppressed to believe. Milk himself said, "If a gay can win, it means there is hope that the system can work for all minorities if we fight. We've given them hope." With such words Harvey Milk funneled the votes of the large homosexual community in San Francisco to the Democratic Party, which is no less a capitalist party of racism, war and "family values" than the Republicans.

Gay Oppression and "Coming Out"

With scenes of handsome, bare-chested men and exuberant parties and parades, *Milk* makes constituency politicking look like a lot of fun. It also represents Milk's personal take on "gay liberation": all the closeted gays should "come out" so that the bigots will see that homosexuals are "just folks" like them. But while this may seem to be true in the small bubbles that are San Francisco's Castro district and New York's Christopher Street, seeing politicized lifestylism and constituency politics as the answer to the oppression of gay people is a most dangerous illusion.

The oppression of homosexuals is not merely or even primarily the result of narrow-mindedness. Homosexuals continue to be repressed by capitalist law. Widespread bigotry on this issue is fundamentally conditioned by the institution of the monogamous family unit, the main social source of the oppression of women, youth and homosexuals in class society, and by the considerable power of organized religion. Such oppression does not make homosexuality in itself political. Sexuality is a complex and essentially personal and *private* matter; thus the Spartacist League most vehemently opposes any government intrusion into consensual sexual activity and private life—we say, "Government out of the bedrooms!"

AP

21 May 1979: Protest at S.F. City Hall against light sentence given to Dan White, who murdered Milk and Moscone.

A corollary is the SL's political opposition to the *program* of "coming out" pushed by "lifestyle liberationists" such as Milk, which may defy but cannot eradicate class-rooted repressive institutions. We defend those who choose to "come out" against victimization by reactionaries. But living as an open homosexual or transvestite or whatever one's individual choice—courageous as it is—can be deadly in this violent, backward, anti-sex society. Recall the brutal killing of Matthew Shepard in 1998—beaten and left hanging on a barbed-wire fence to die—and of Gwen Araujo, a transgender youth, in 2002. A 2006 survey by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network reported that violent attacks are a daily part of life for gay, lesbian and transgender youth: nearly two-thirds reported feeling unsafe at school, over a third experienced physical harassment, and nearly a fifth were assaulted because of their sexual orientation.

Young gays in the Castro today might note that the cross on Mt. Davidson still dominates the city's southern skyline and bear in mind that the first big concentration of gays in the Bay Area was not the footloose youth of the late 1960s-'70s "sexual liberation" era. During World War II, with San Francisco as its West Coast embarkation point, U.S. imperialism threw tens of thousands of young men out of the military as homosexuals, giving them blue discharge papers marked with a capital H. The Department of Defense still refuses to say how many thousands were discharged. Not relishing the prospect of returning to their hometowns, many of these young men stayed in San Francisco. An excellent book by Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire*, details the history of these gay men and women, many of whom first met others like themselves in the military in World War II. Today, gays still aren't allowed to serve openly in the U.S. military. According to a 2004 report by the gay rights group Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, in the ten years after Democratic president Bill Clinton adopted the infamous "don't ask, don't tell" policy, around 10,000 service members were discharged for being gay or bisexual.

Who Was Harvey Milk?

As Randy Shilts recounts in his 1982 biography *The Mayor of Castro Street*, Harvey Milk was a latecomer to the politics of "gay power." After his 1951 college graduation, Milk, a fervent anti-Communist who wanted to stop the Reds from taking over Asia, enlisted in the Navy during the Korean War, where he rose rapidly through the ranks to become an officer. After leaving the Navy, Milk worked as an insurance broker and a researcher at a Wall Street investment firm. A staunch conservative, he was a supporter of Republican Barry Goldwater, opposing any kind of government intervention in the capitalist economy. Milk was at this time entirely uninterested in his homosexuality as a political question. But as '60s New Left radicalism swung into full sway, Harvey Milk got into hippie lifestylism, growing his hair long as he hung with the cast of the flower-power hit *Hair*. By the early '70s, he and his lover Scott Smith had moved to San Francisco.

Harvey Milk's transformation from New York stockbroker to San Francisco Democrat moved him from the conservative to the liberal wing of capitalist politics. He built his power base in the Castro as a small businessman, defender of his community and president of the gay-dominated Castro Village Association. The movie portrays Milk's politics quite accurately. Sean Penn gives us pretty much word-for-word Milk's speech at the San Francisco Gay Freedom Day Parade in June 1978. Milk quoted patriotic passages from the verses engraved on the Statue of Liberty, phrases from the Declaration of Independence and the national anthem, and continued:

> "No matter how hard you try, you cannot erase those words from the Declaration of Independence. No matter how hard you try, you cannot chip those words from off the base of the Statue of Liberty. And no matter how hard you try, you cannot sing the 'Star-Spangled Banner' without those words. That's what America is. Love it or leave it."

Milk said in his inauguration speech as San Francisco supervisor: "I fully understand the debt and responsibility that major corporations owe the shareholders.... American business must realize that while the shareholders always come first, the care and feeding of their customer is a close second." And gays, Milk insisted, were among their best customers—if not fellow players.

The Democratic Party Machine in San Francisco

Played by actor Josh Brolin, reactionary bigot Dan White is first shown in the movie spouting a sentence from his election campaign: "I'm not going to be forced out of San Francisco by splinter groups of radicals, social deviates and incorrigibles." Ex-cop Dan White didn't fit in with the clique of slick professional politicians who made up the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. For most of these well-off businessmen, realtors and lawyers, open contempt for the oppressed is considered bad taste. But there was no fundamental difference in the class loyalties of the three players, despite how White's vengeance drama played out against Moscone and Milk. As we pointed out following the murders in "Reformists Weep for Strikebreaker Moscone" (*WV* No. 222, 5 January 1979): "Just who are these 'elected officials' anyway? Isn't Moscone the same capitalist politician who crushed the 1976 San Francisco municipal craft workers strike? Isn't Milk responsible for funneling votes of the large homosexual 'community' to the party of Anita Bryant, the Dixiecrats and the Vietnam War?"

In the '60s and '70s the Democratic Party machine in San Francisco was undergoing certain tactical shifts spurred by social and economic changes in the area. As the industrial base shrank and gentrification took over many old working-class neighborhoods like the Castro, San Francisco looked to tourism and to building up the downtown financial district as a corporate center. Old-time party bosses, with ties to the Catholic church and the white ethnic neighborhoods, were giving way to the new liberal-chic politicians who remain in power today. It is really these changes that are responsible for this huge falling out in the Democratic Party power structure, which exploded in Dan White's murder of Moscone and Milk.

The movie ends with a candlelight march of tens of thousands in mourning for Harvey Milk. But the important aftermath is reduced to a couple of sentences on the screen: Dan White, who committed two coldblooded killings—of elected government officials, no less—that couldn't have looked more like deliberate, premeditated murder in the first degree, was slapped on the wrist with two counts of voluntary manslaughter and sentenced to less than seven years in prison (he served five). If some gay person had murdered ex-cop White and Moscone, you can bet that nothing less than the death penalty, on the spot, would have sufficed.

So naturally the "gay ghetto" exploded in rage. Well into the night, thousands battled with the cops. Nearly every window in City Hall was broken and the doors were smashed, while Mayor Dianne Feinstein (now a U.S. Senator) and other bigwigs were trapped inside. Cop cars and paddy wagons went up in flames. We wrote in "Behind S.F. Night of Gay Rage" (*WV* No. 234, 22 June 1979):

> "Revolutionaries solidarize with the legitimate outrage of San Francisco's homosexuals over the light sentence given to this bigoted, reactionary, killer ex-cop. And we fully support their defending themselves against the rampaging goons of the capitalist state. But the identification of many San Francisco gay people with Harvey Milk generally translates into political support for the liberal-chic wing of the Democratic Party, a ruling-class group whose policies toward workers and the poor are often harsher than their more traditional old-line 'machine' opponents."

How did Dan White get off so easily? The infamous "Twinkie defense" claimed that sugary junk food contributed to a mood disturbance that resulted in "diminished capacity." At the time, there were cries of collusion between the cops and the D.A. as well as charges of homopho-

McLeod/SF Examiner

Supervisor Harvey Milk (left) with ally, Mayor George Moscone, April 1978. Below: Striking workers face Moscone's cops at San Francisco City Hall, April 1976.

WV Photo

hia against the judge and jury. But the real point is that the jury wanted to believe Dan White's defense. The jury, largely working-class and middle-class, was drawn from those areas of San Francisco that were seen as the last bastion of family life. *WV* commented:

> "What the jury shared with White was not simply 'homophobia' but a fear, exploited by the reactionary White, that San Francisco has become unlivable for 'just plain folks.'
>
> "But this ex-cop turned Supervisor was not 'just plain folks'; he was not some working-class guy driven into a crazy frenzy by some posh liberal snobs. Dan White was a dangerous reactionary politician. He exploited the fears, grievances and economic distress of San Francisco's ethnic Catholic lower classes for the politics of racist, anti-gay bigotry, just as Harvey Milk exploited homosexual oppression for the liberal-sophisticate face of capitalist rule."

After Dianne Feinstein was elected mayor in her own right in 1979, one of her first acts as she sought the support of gay voters was to mandate the recruitment of gay cops into the San Francisco police force. By 1980, one in seven new police recruits was either a lesbian or a gay man. Such "diversity" does not alter the cops' role as agents of repression for the ruling class, which includes persecuting immigrants, black youth and striking workers.

WV Photos

June 1977 NYC gay rights demonstration: SL contingent (left) called for proletarian perspective, opposed reformist/liberal adaptation to Democrat Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" campaign.

Jimmy Carter, "Human Rights" and the Anti-Sex Witchhunt

Milk shows a 30-second cameo of then-president Jimmy Carter calling on Californians to vote against Prop 6, the John Briggs initiative on the 1978 state ballot that sought the firing of homosexual teachers and their supporters. Aside from this issue and the "Save Our Children" campaign promoted by homophobic "sunshine girl" and spokeswoman for Florida orange juice Anita Bryant, the crucial context of national and international politics is absent from the movie. But Anita Bryant and Briggs were not isolated nutcases out to wreck things for the progressive gays. They were the voices of larger political forces at work, directed from the White House. While Prop 6 was defeated, Carter's formal opposition signified no commitment to gay rights (even supreme bigot Ronald Reagan opposed Prop 6 at the time).

Coming to office in 1977, the Democratic Carter administration kicked off an onslaught of domestic social reaction and the renewal of U.S. imperialism's Cold War drive aimed at the destruction of the Soviet Union, garbed in the call for "human rights." These policies reflected the attempt of the American ruling class to overcome widespread fear and loathing of the government following the explosive years of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the rise of the New Left, the women's liberation movement and black radicalization, and finally the Watergate break-in that forced the resignation of Republican president Richard ("I am not a crook") Nixon in 1974. For the American bourgeoisie, this all-sided social turmoil and defiance of authority was deeply disturbing, and the potential for an alliance of black militants and radicalized students with an increasingly restive labor movement was a threat that had to be stopped. Thus a major bourgeois ideological assault was launched to overcome the "Vietnam syndrome" and to instill an unquestioning acceptance of capitalism, God and family, including the desirability of dying for one's country.

The Carter administration brought "born again" religious fundamentalism front and center into the White House. This was the national backdrop for Bryant's "Save Our Children" campaign of hate and Briggs's witchhunting of gay teachers. While the movie makes good fun of these bigots, showing Milk's sharp wit in debate with Briggs, Milk is also shown promoting the deadly illusion that the bigots had actually done gays a favor by publicizing their oppression, forcing them to "unite" against it. In fact, the Bryant campaign, which rallied the forces of the aggressive hard core of virulent reaction, was a grave threat not only to homosexuals, but to all concerned with democratic rights. Indeed, paired with Briggs's Prop 6 on the California ballot was a tougher death penalty initiative, Prop 7. Briggs insisted that the two issues were inexorably tied together. A fund-raising letter issued by his campaign raved against California's "ineffective" death penalty law and listed homosexual teachers as an equally horrendous threat.

The Spartacist League intervened heavily into the nationwide demonstrations against anti-gay bigotry. The oppression of homosexuals, like the oppression of women, serves as an index of more general social and political attitudes. The SL has always recognized that democratic rights are indivisible—and indeed has stood out in opposing reactionary state repression of the most oppressed or marginalized, including Mormon polygamists and NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association), a group shunned by more "respectable" gays for simply advocating the decriminalization of consensual sex between men and boys. As we wrote in "Rightist Reaction Pushes Anti-Homosexual Hysteria: Stop Anita Bryant!" (*WV* No. 165, 8 July 1977):

> "To struggle effectively against the persecution of homosexuals, 'gay rights' activists must begin by understanding that bourgeois democracy is partial, fragile and reversible.... The struggle fundamentally is not about sex but about all-sided democratic rights. The 'Save Our Children' mobilization is presently the most visible component of a much broader rightist offensive aimed at rolling back real and token gains of the last decade of liberalism. Recent targets include legal and safe abortions, especially for poor women; the Equal Rights Amendment; busing to combat school segregation; preferential minority-group college admissions. The 'right-to-lifers' screaming for the death penalty grasp the logic of the Bryant crusade far better than do some of its opponents."

Today, over 30 years later, the bitter truth of that warning is all too apparent. In the 1980s, reactionaries seized on the deadly AIDS epidemic to demonize gays. Who even remembers the Equal Rights Amendment, a proposed amendment to the Constitution simply affirming formal equality for women? Busing and affirmative action are dead, the racist death penalty has claimed over a thousand lives since its reinstitution in 1976, legal and safe abortion is ever more out of reach for poor women. And the Soviet Union has been destroyed by counterrevolution, a world-historic defeat for the working class. In *Milk* you see the occasional picket sign demanding "human rights" for gays. This was a major demand of the anti-Bryant demonstrations, an implicit endorsement of Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade to rearm U.S. imperialism, extending its buzzwords to homosexuals in the U.S.

We Marxists opposed the imperialist campaign against the USSR. We called for unconditional military defense of this bureaucratically degenerated workers state against imperialist assault and internal counterrevolution. We also called for political revolution by the working class to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and restore soviet democracy and the proletarian internationalism of Lenin's Bolsheviks.

Full Democratic Rights for Gays!

The alliance of lifestyle radicals, reformists and Democrats can promise only token reforms that enrage American backwardness and touch off new waves of backlash. Today, over 40 states have enacted laws banning same-sex marriage. In California, an unholy alliance of the Mormons, the Catholic church and evangelical Protestants went on a rampage to get Prop 8 passed. Recognizing that with Obama's candidacy black voters would turn out at the polls in record numbers, a big push was made to find allies among conservative black Baptist preachers. A full-page ad in the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, the city's major black newspaper, urged a yes vote on Prop 8 to restore "the sanctity of marriage."

Perhaps the most effective campaign tool to boost Proposition 8 was the "robocalls" to people's cell phones with recordings of Obama addressing a crowd with the declaration: "I believe marriage is a union between a man and a woman. Now, for me as a Christian, it is also a sacred union." While proclaiming that he did not support Proposition 8 because it was "unnecessary," Obama's opposition to gay marriage is a direct echo of Bush and other fundamentalist yahoos of both capitalist parties. After all, Bill Clinton signed the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act that pronounced, "The word 'marriage' means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife." In the same year, he signed the "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act," part of his ending "welfare as we know it," consigning millions of impoverished mothers and children to misery and hunger.

The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs joined protests against Prop 8 with placards demanding: "Down With Prop 8! For the Right of Gay Marriage... and Divorce!", "State, Church and Family: Holy Trinity of Women's Oppression!" and "Don't Crawl for the Democrats—Build a Workers Party!" As fighters for the socialist liberation of humanity, we are committed to full democratic rights for gays, lesbians and transgenders, and we support any legal advances that can be wrested from this cruelly bigoted society, including the right to marry. But we do not advocate or prettify the institution of marriage. We fight for a society in which no one needs to be forced into a legal straitjacket in order to get medical benefits, visitation rights, custody of children, immigration rights, or any of the many privileges this capitalist society grants to those, and only those, who are embedded in the traditional "one man on one woman for life" marital mold.

In the '70s, politicians like Harvey

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September 1977 *WV* fusion supplement, jointly published by Spartacist League and Red Flag Union, featured display of both organizations' publications (below).

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Keynes...

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devaluation further feeds domestic inflation, producing a vicious spiral. Britain and Italy are the clearest examples of this process.

The second reason for the accelerated inflation is that the sharp 1972-73 world boom had an effect on agricultural and raw material supplies similar to that of a major war. From the Korean War through 1971 the terms of trade for agricultural products/raw materials had deteriorated relative to manufactures, producing a fundamental imbalance in global productive capacity. During 1972 when industrial output in the advanced capitalist countries increased by 8 percent, global food production actually fell slightly (OECD, *Economic Outlook*, December 1973). These physical shortages quickly generated speculation, hoarding and cartel manipulation. Between 1971 and 1973 the index of world raw material prices increased by over 80 percent, as did the price of internationally traded food products (OECD, *Economic Outlook*, December 1974). Thus two factors—the widespread resort to competitive devaluation after 1971 and the effect of the 1972-73 boom on agricultural and raw material supplies—account for the price explosion of the last few years.

Even discounting the fact that it is empirically false, the argument that Keynesianism is now ineffective because it leads to intolerable inflation is not a fundamental but rather a temporary, conjunctural one. As an attempted objective analysis it is similar to the present position of certain right-wing Keynesians, such as Federal Reserve Board chairman Arthur F. Burns and Ford's economic adviser William Fellner, who contend that a few years of high-unemployment slump are needed to drain the inflationary pressures out of the world capitalist system. After that, they contend, Keynesian policies can again produce 10 or 20 years of low-inflation, mild-recession expansion.

If there is no major war nor a mass revolutionary upheaval in West Europe during the next few years (both are genuine possibilities), the world depression should deepen this year, giving way to high-unemployment stagnation lasting at least through 1976. If this occurs, in two years the rate of inflation will be greatly reduced; it already shows numerous signs of slowing. Those leftists whose central argument against bourgeois economic reformism is that it leads to ever-accelerating inflation will then find themselves theoretically defenseless against the claims of resurgent Keynesianism.

The "theory" that for a generation capitalist governments were able to prevent major crises and stimulate exceptional economic expansion has an implacable revisionist logic. Whatever the subjective attitudes of its proponents this view leads straight to the conclusion that we have been living in an epoch of capitalist economic stability. Such arguments have nothing in common with Marxism. On the contrary, the Transitional Program of the Fourth International has as its cornerstone the Leninist theory of imperialism as the highest (last) stage of capitalism, its epoch of decay and a period of wars and revolutions. This must be our perspective.■

Getty

Line for food handouts in Detroit, December 2008.

Tiller...

(continued from page 2)

hysterical uproar among anti-abortion bigots when he nominated as Health and Human Services Secretary Kansas governor Kathleen Sebelius, a "pro-choice" Democrat who sponsored an April 2007 event at the governor's residence with Tiller and his clinic's staff. Yet during the election campaign, Obama told the Christian magazine *Relevant* that he opposed mental health exceptions for "late-term" abortion bans because "I don't think that 'mental distress' qualifies as the health of the mother" (AP, 4 July 2008). In office, Obama stripped from his economic stimulus package a proposal to allow states to expand Medicaid coverage of contraception and other family planning services. Obama's proposed 2010 budget has been hailed by liberals for setting aside $634 billion for health care, but the reality is that about half that sum would come from spending cuts in programs such as Medicare and Medicaid.

The attacks on abortion rights are part of a campaign of social reaction aimed at regimenting the entire population—not just women, but black people, immigrants, gays and the working class as a whole. While the anti-abortion bigots call themselves "pro-life," they enthusiastically support the racist death penalty. The U.S. has one of the highest rates of infant mortality in the industrialized world.

The fight for abortion rights, decent living conditions and free quality health care mandates that we build a revolutionary workers party. The working class has the social power necessary to mobilize in defense of not only women, but all the oppressed. But to exercise that power it is necessary to wage a political struggle against the labor bureaucracy that keeps working people tied to the Democratic Party. The elimination of the right to abortion would redound against ***all*** working people. As we have often underlined, democratic rights either go forward together or fall back separately. The working class is uniquely situated to bring capitalist rule to an end. For women's liberation through socialist revolution!■

Milk...

(continued from page 9)

Milk represented the wing of the gay rights movement at peace with capitalism. But there were others, disaffected with capitalism, who broke from sectoralism—the "left" version of plain old capitalist "constituency politics"—and found their way to communism. A dozen cadre of the Los Angeles-based "gay liberation/communist" Red Flag Union (RFU), formerly the Lavender & Red Union, fused with the Spartacist League in 1977.

In the course of their political journey, the RFU rejected the false programs of a number of our reformist opponents. Against both crude Maoists like the RCP and anti-Communist "state capitalists" like the Shachtmanite Revolutionary Socialist League (since deceased), they came to the Trotskyist position of defense of the degenerated and deformed workers states while calling for workers political revolution. Opportunist groups like the feminist Freedom Socialist Party sought to cater to the supposed "lifestylism" of the RFU by slandering the SL's so-called "closet rule," which simply states that in public our members seek to be known by their politics, not by their lifestyles. The RFU agreed with the SL's position and sharply refuted the opportunists' slanders.

The RFU wrote in *Red Flag* No. 3, a special fusion supplement to *Workers Vanguard* (*WV* No. 172, 9 September 1977): "There is no special revolutionary program for homosexuals. The communist program includes demands which address the special oppression of homosexuals. But unlike sectoralists, revolutionaries understand that the fate of homosexuals—like that of any other oppressed group—is determined by the course of the class struggle." The RFU comrades came to understand that only the road of the Bolshevik October Revolution can open up a future of a socialist world where all forms of oppression and exploitation will be eradicated.

Only a socialist revolution can lay the basis for the replacement of the institution of the family with socialized childcare and housework. In the first five years of the Russian Revolution under Lenin and Trotsky, the Bolsheviks, insofar as they could in conditions of extreme poverty and international isolation, sought to liberate women through collectivized kitchens, childcare, dwellings and schools. As well, laws against ***all forms*** of consensual sex were abolished, establishing the noninterference of the state in all matters of private life. While a revolutionary government will always act to promote all measures to bring about freedom for all, bigotry cannot simply be abolished by decree. But the Bolsheviks understood that liberation is a material act, requiring resources far beyond those available to a backward peasant society like Russia. Nonetheless, the forces of ***proletarian*** state repression put the bigots and former oppressors on the run.

To finally arrive at classless communism requires the destruction of capitalist imperialism as a world system and the establishment of a world socialist division of labor, leading to a tremendous leap in the productive forces that can provide material plenty for all. The withering away of the family as the basic institution defining sexual relations will result in the eventual disappearance of patriarchal relations and of generalized anti-homosexual oppression. Our task is to build a revolutionary workers party like the Bolshevik Party that will act as a tribune of the people, a defender of all the oppressed, to lead the fight for world socialist revolution.■

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Chicagoist

"Anybody but Bush" reformists got what they wanted: a (warmongering) Democrat in the White House. From left: RCP's World Can't Wait at 2007 march in Washington; ISO-led appeal to Obama at Chicago campaign rally, February 2007; *Workers World* (13 November 2008) cheers Obama's election.

U.S. Troops...

(continued from page 1)

condemns countless numbers of people to death by malnutrition, lack of medical care, etc. Our standpoint is one of proletarian class opposition to the U.S. capitalist rulers and to the imperialist system as a whole.

Thus, we forthrightly called for the military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against imperialist attack in the 2001 and 2003 invasions, without giving any political support to the reactionary, womanhating Taliban cutthroats or the bloody capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. We underlined that every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed the world over. We have stressed from the beginning that the chief means of defending neocolonial Afghanistan and Iraq against the overwhelming military might of American imperialism and its allies is international working-class struggle, especially by the multiracial U.S. proletariat. Today, we call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S troops and bases from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia!

Democrats and Republicans may differ over which tactics are most effective in pursuing the interests of U.S. imperialism, but they are both bourgeois parties that defend the interests of the capitalist ruling class. We oppose on principle *any* political support to bourgeois politicians—Democrats, Republicans or Greens. We fight instead for a program based on the mobilization of the multiracial proletariat independent of and in opposition to the parties of capitalist imperialism. As James Burnham, then a leader of the Workers Party, the Trotskyist organization in the U.S. at the time, argued in his 1936 pamphlet "War and the Workers":

> "To suppose, therefore, that revolutionists can work out a common 'program against war' with non-revolutionists is a fatal illusion. Any organization based upon such a program is not only powerless to prevent war; in practice it acts to promote war, both because it serves in its own way to uphold the system that breeds war, and because it diverts the attention of its members from the real fight against war. There is only *one* program against war: the program *for* revolution—the program of the revolutionary party of the workers."

Only the working class has the objective interest and social power to smash the capitalist system. And it is only the eradication of capitalism through a series of workers revolutions in the U.S. and around the world that the basis can be laid for a classless, communist society in which war, poverty and exploitation are relics of a benighted past.

The reformist alternative to this revolutionary perspective is today captured in the groveling displayed by much of the left toward the new Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism. This was expressed in a particularly craven form by WWP, whose Teresa Gutierrez raved in *Workers World* (20 November 2008):

> "As communists and revolutionaries we take joy with the oppressed and other progressives as they gather in jubilation from Harlem to Colombia to Japan to Kenya with the election of Obama.... Our love of the oppressed masses—like our solidarity with the working class—extends even when it involves the presidency of the strongest imperialist country ever."

An ordinary New Leftist of a generation or two ago would have found this expression of love for an American president repulsive. It is a measure of how far to the right the reformists have moved under the sway of the imperialists' "death of communism" crusade that avowed "leftists" now openly embrace the chief executive of the ruling class that brought humanity the nuclear incineration of 200,000 people in

V. Deni and M. Cheremnykh

1920 Soviet poster reads: "Comrade Lenin cleans the world of its filth." Bolshevik Revolution pointed way forward to proletarian revolution internationally against capitalist system that breeds war.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the slaughter of millions in counterrevolutionary wars in Korea and Vietnam in the 1950s and '60s, and countless CIA-sponsored coups and death squad regimes in Latin America and elsewhere—to cite just a few of the crimes of U.S. imperialism. We say: Anti-imperialism abroad means class struggle at home! The reformists practice the inverse: Class collaboration at home means whitewashing the crimes of the imperialist butchers abroad.

Far from being a potential ally in the struggle against imperialist war and social injustice, Obama is, if anything, a potentially more effective and therefore more pernicious guardian of imperialist interests than his dunderhead predecessor. The president of the U.S., whether Democrat or Republican, stands at the head of the most massive military power in history and of the domestic machinery of repression that maintains social oppression and capitalist exploitation. As Marxists, we do not run for president, mayor or other executive offices in the bourgeois state. To stand for election to an executive position carries the implication that one is ready to accept responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state. It is an elementary tenet of revolutionary Marxism that the working class cannot wield the capitalist state for its own interests; rather it must smash that state and replace it with a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

One small organization that claims to stand apart from the pro-Democratic pack is the Internationalist Group (IG). In an article recently posted on their Web site, "Obama Presidency: U.S. Imperialism Tries a Makeover," dated February 2008 (*sic*), the IG proclaims: "The Internationalist Group did not call for a vote for Obama, the candidate of the Democratic Party, one of the twin parties of racist American capitalism, nor do we celebrate his presidency." True enough, but the IG was more than willing to provide left cover for the Obama swamp in pursuing its own opportunist appetites. The IG's role in the syphilitic chain that keeps labor tied to the capitalists and their political parties was made clear in the way it cozied up to the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) bureaucracy at the time of the West Coast port shutdown in opposition to the war in Iraq last May Day.

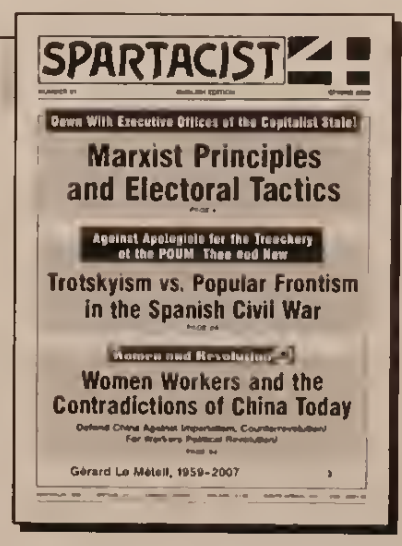
That shutdown pointed the way to the kind of working-class action that is needed against the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. But the ILWU leadership undermined this action by channeling the ranks' anger at the Iraq occupation and desire to defend the union into pro-Democratic Party "national unity" patriotism. Shortly after announcing the May Day action, the ILWU International announced its endorsement of Obama. At the ILWU May Day rally in San Francisco, a statement by ILWU International president Bob McEllrath was read from the platform, declaring that "longshore workers" are "loyal to America" and "won't stand by while our country, our troops, and our economy are destroyed" by the war. The rally was politically dominated by capitalist politicians, including a representative of black Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee.

Breaking workers in the U.S. from their illusions in the Democratic Party as a "lesser evil" is a central strategic task for Marxists fighting for the class independence of the proletariat and for a revolutionary workers party. This requires a political struggle against the trade-union bureaucracy, which subordinates the working class to its capitalist class enemy, not least through political support to the Democratic Party. Yet in three lengthy articles enthusing over the ILWU action last year, the IG downplayed the role of the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy in supporting the Democrats—and this in an election year.

The first of these articles, in March 2008, had all of three references, in passing, to the Democrats—and none at all to the labor bureaucracy's support to same. Their second article, in April, at least included a reference to the need to break with the Democrats, lamely opining that "The ILWU leaders' endorsement of Obama hurts rather than helps the struggle against imperialist war and undercuts the May 1 work stoppage." As we noted at the time, "How delicately put! The unions' endorsement of Obama provided the entire political framework in which the May Day action played out" ("Labor: Break with Democrats, 'National Unity' Patriotism! ILWU Shuts West Coast Ports on May Day," *WV* No. 914, 9 May 2008). And to complete the picture, the IG's third article, in May, includes no mention of Obama at all.

In a follow-up article, the IG denounced the various reformists who "could care less about the ILWU's dramatic action" and whose "entire strategy is, has been *and must be* to pressure the Democrats" (*Internationalist*, May 2008). But in the hands of the ILWU bureaucracy, the longshore stopwork was aimed, no less than the reformists' antiwar coalitions, at pressuring and enhancing the authority of the Democrats.

We fight for a workers party with a revolutionary internationalist program aimed at the liberation of the proletariat and all the oppressed. The current recession demonstrates anew that the workings of the capitalist system inevitably lead to crises. Notwithstanding the recent prolonged absence of significant labor struggle on the American scene, the coming years will undoubtedly see outbreaks of sharp class struggle. The task is to forge a revolutionary leadership capable of leading those struggles in the direction of an overturn of the entire capitalist system. As opposed to the Obama-enthralled reformist opponents, we follow the proletarian, internationalist and revolutionary road of the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky. ■



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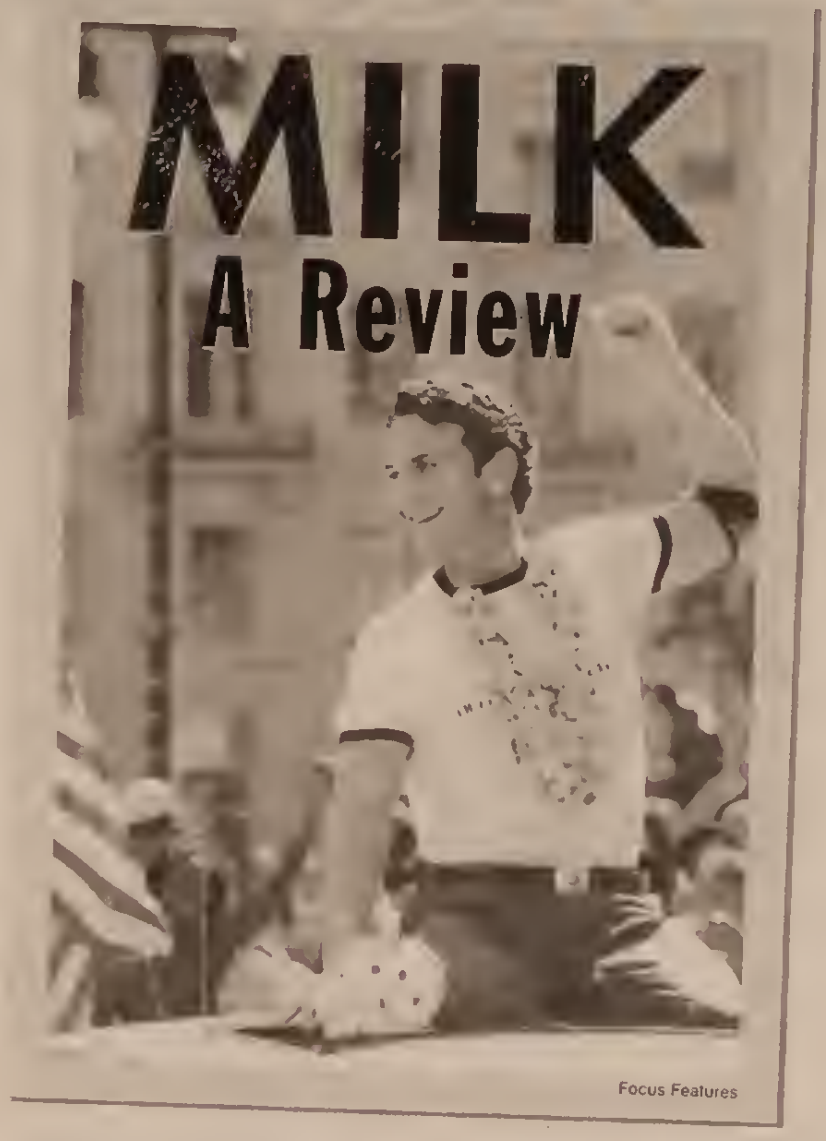
WORKERS VANGUARD

The Communist Program and the Fight Against Homosexual Oppression



Focus Features

By Amy Rath

The San Francisco Democratic Party establishment learned decades ago how to manipulate the rhetoric of "gay power" to bolster its rule, and the story of Harvey Milk is front and center in that spin. At the time of the murders of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Milk in 1978, the Democratic Party machine seized on the issue for political capital and it hasn't stopped since. Spouting "gay rights" rhetoric to round up votes, the city government flaunts "progressive" pretensions while it does the work of capitalism in oppressing the poor and exploited and attempting to tame the powerful Bay Area labor movement. It's by no means a fluke of history that San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom rode the movement for gay marriage as part of his bid for national prominence as a Democratic Party politician.

Thus, when *Milk*, Gus Van Sant's biopic about the first openly gay member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, had its world premiere last October in a special showing at the Castro Theatre (just down the block from Milk's old camera store), Newsom joined the movie moguls and film stars strutting on the red carpet. Patrons paid $50 to see the film and as much as $15,000 to attend the post-premiere dinner and party at City Hall. With characteristic smugness, Newsom congratulated the city "progressives" on the changes of the last 30 years: "This story couldn't have happened anywhere else" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 October 2008). No doubt he hopes that this "for the people" veneer will prove useful as California sinks more deeply into economic crisis and layoffs engulf the working class. After all, Newsom got elected mayor based on his reactionary "Care Not Cash" initiative that sought to drive the homeless from the city. His championship of gay marriage helped bring his left-liberal opponents solidly into his camp.

Has any film been as good for the city's political and business establishment as *Milk*? Newsom opened City Hall to on-site filming of Moscone's murder, while various worthies of the San Francisco establishment appeared in person in the movie, including the openly gay politician Tom Ammiano (formerly president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and currently a member of the California State Assembly). The on-site filming poured money into the coffers of the city and its merchants. Now tourists are flocking to the Castro district to see the home base of Harvey Milk's gay constituency.

Milk tells the story of how "gay power" became institutionalized in City Hall, and it's fairly accurate within the limited scope of the movie's storyline, which focuses on Milk as a gay politician to the exclusion of the larger political and social forces of the time. The movie is well-made, enjoyable entertainment. Hailed by fans and reviewers everywhere as brilliant in his portrayal of Harvey Milk, Sean Penn won an Oscar for best actor. He certainly deserves it. Not least of Milk's gifts to the capitalist Democratic Party was his puckish charm and outspoken courage, and Penn shows it all.

WV Photo

Oakland: Spartacists at 15 November 2008 protest against anti-gay Proposition 8. Sign at center reads: "Barack Obama—Next Commander in Chief of U.S. Imperialism, Enemy of World's Working People!"

Women and Revolution

Adding not a little to the interest sparked by the movie itself was the passage of California's reactionary Proposition 8—which overturned the legalization of same-sex marriage—last November 4, only days before the film opened nationwide. Headlines read "*Milk* Recaptures Californian Intolerance at Exactly the Right Time" (*Village Voice*, 26 November 2008) and "Activists Seek to Tie 'Milk' to a Campaign for Gay Rights" (*New York Times*, 21 November 2008). But it's not just some of the reviewers in the capitalist press that relish the connection: our reformist opponents on the left are salivating over the movie.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) hails the movie's opening "at a crucial teaching moment in the struggle" and comments that the "latest explosion of gay militancy" is "magnificent" ("Teamsters and Trannies, Unite!" *International Socialist Review*, January-February 2009). Certainly tens of thousands have protested in the streets against Prop 8, and we Spartacists have joined them, opposing all discrimination against gays with our own revolutionary program—while also pointing out that the demands of the "movement" are limited to lobbying the Democrats for a few token reforms. The main strategy of Prop 8's opponents is to sue to overturn the law.

For the supposedly "socialist" ISO, over the moon over the ascension of mainstream bourgeois politician Barack Obama (who opposes gay marriage) to the imperial presidency, a "movement" which can more effectively pressure capitalist politicians for such reforms *is* the ultimate goal. Thus the ISO article enthused over "genuine rainbow power"—i.e., Teamsters, transvestites, former Republic Windows workers, Latinos and gays united—but united for what? Their "ultimate" demand is to overturn Bill Clinton's reactionary "Defense of Marriage Act" and to "tell President Barack Obama and the Democratic Congress to end this federally sanctioned discrimination once and for all." Who are they kidding? We support full democratic rights for gays, but as Marxists we understand that anti-gay bigotry will not be rooted out short of a socialist revolution which overturns capitalism.

For its part, the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), creator of the "World Can't Wait" outfit, says the film "resonates in what is at times an almost eerie way" with the current political assault on gay marriage and "the powerful resistance from the people, particularly the gay and lesbian community" (*Revolution*, 14 December 2008). At the time of the events depicted in the film, however, the RCP spouted the grotesque Stalinist/Maoist line that homosexuality was a "sickness" and barred gays from membership in their organization. Thus their enthusing over *Milk* today rings grossly hollow—though their tailing of petty-bourgeois reformist "movements" is consistent.

For such reformists, politicians like Harvey Milk are the stuff of their illusions in "fight the right" Democrats. George Moscone, the supposed "friend of labor" mayor, and Harvey Milk, the uncloseted gay supervisor, are cast as progressive martyrs cut down by hoary reaction in the person of the bigoted ex-cop Dan White (who was *also* a Democrat, although no one likes to admit it). This is just a means of tailing the Democratic Party establishment in San Francisco, where the votes of homosexuals are corralled to fuel a vicious anti-labor drive. Moscone came into office in 1976 with a tough-on-labor line, signaled by a series of anti-union propositions on the city ballot attacking the pay scales and benefits of city workers. In 1976—during the period covered by the movie, which restricts labor struggle to the Coors beer boycott that Milk assisted—Moscone's anti-labor offensive led to a bitter, hard-fought strike by city craft workers backed up by Muni mass transit drivers.

Keeping social protest safely within

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 933 | C-701 | 27 March 2009

ANC, C.O.P.E.: Two Faces of Neo-Apartheid Capitalism

EPA photos

South African Elections: No Choice for Workers, Poor

JOHANNESBURG, March 21—On April 22 national elections will be held for the fourth time in South Africa since the end of white-supremacist apartheid rule in 1994. That "political breakthrough," which put the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC) in power, did not bring about social and economic equality for the brutally oppressed black, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian masses. The rigid, legally enforced segregation and subjugation that defined apartheid are no more. But behind the "liberation" rhetoric of the ANC and its Tripartite Alliance partners, the reformist South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) bureaucracy, and the democratic trappings of "one man, one vote," the economic and social foundations of white supremacy based on the super-exploitation of overwhelmingly black labour remain intact. Neo-apartheid has benefitted the white capitalists and the emerging black elite.

In the upcoming elections, Spartacist South Africa, section of the International Communist League, declares that there is not a single party that represents the interests of the working class and the poor. Following the split in the ANC last year and the formation of the Congress of the People (C.O.P.E.) by supporters of former president Thabo Mbeki, the Tripartite Alliance partners have been working overtime to rally support for the ANC under the populist Jacob Zuma, who won election as ANC president over Mbeki at the 2007 Polokwane conference. In denouncing C.O.P.E. as an anti-working-class party, SACP/COSATU leaders point to the fact that its leaders split from the ANC to the right. In reality, despite the ANC's "pro-worker" and "pro-poor" rhetoric, the ANC and C.O.P.E. are both bourgeois-nationalist—i.e., capitalist—parties. Both represent the interests of the aspiring black bourgeoisie and the predominantly white capitalist ruling class.

Collingridge/The Star

Top left: ANC president Jacob Zuma. Top right: Mosiuoa Lekota, C.O.P.E. leader. Above: Protest against lack of "service delivery"—housing, electricity, basic sanitation, roads—in front of government offices in Soweto, March 3.

During the 1980s, there were huge confrontations between the apartheid regime and the oppressed masses, expressed particularly with a rising wave of militancy by black labour. While defending the courageous anti-apartheid fighters against state repression, we stressed that "the ANC's policy of 'making the townships ungovernable' is designed to *pressure*, not overthrow, the white ruling class" ("Smash Apartheid! For Workers Revolution!" *WV* No. 395, 17 January 1986). Especially through the SACP, the proletariat was politically subordinated to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. When the ANC did consummate its aspirations to share power with the white ruling class in 1994, it was the logical outcome of its programme. Since then, the ANC/SACP/COSATU government, which until recently included the founders of C.O.P.E., has imposed austerity, broken strikes and presided over the deep poverty of the masses, helping to lead to a revival of capitalist profits.

As revolutionary Marxists, we give no electoral support to bourgeois parties as a matter of principle. Unlike the SACP's reformist leadership, we do not tell the workers and impoverished masses that their demands for the basic necessities of life will be won through their leaders' getting their hands on the "democratic" bourgeois state—on a national, provincial or municipal level. Paraphrasing Karl Marx, revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin wrote in *The State and Revolution* (1917): "To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism." Nor do we spread the illusion, common to the entire reformist left, that workers and the poor will achieve their demands through pressuring the Tripartite Alliance, a nationalist popular front that chains working-class organisations to the capitalist exploiters through the bourgeois ANC.

The SSA calls for workers and the poor to break from the Tripartite Alliance. We fight to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party that will lead the struggle for socialist revolution. The neo-apartheid capitalist state must be smashed and replaced with a workers state that expropriates the banks, mines and factories and creates a planned economy where production is for social use, not private profit. We fight for a ***black-centred workers government***. There can be no justice in South Africa

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Break with the Tripartite Alliance! For a Black-Centered Workers Government!

On the Civil Rights Movement

1 March 2009

Workers Vanguard:

I wish to make some comments about the article "Communist Organizing in the Jim Crow South" (*WV* No. 925 [21 November 2008]). First, in the section entitled "The Civil Rights Movement," There is a self-contradictory statement that "...from its onset, the civil rights movement was dominated by a black middle-class leadership allied to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. The aim of liberal-pacifist leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Farmer was to pressure the Democratic administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson to grant formal, legal equality. Yet the myth of the civil rights movement as monolithically pacifist and dominated by King ignores that the struggle against segregation also produced more militant forces, such as Robert F. Williams, who advocated and practiced armed self-defense...."

SNCC leader Willie Ricks speaking on Atlanta street, winter 1963-64.

The predecessor to the Spartacist League, the Revolutionary Tendency of the Socialist Workers Party, stated in 1963 that:

> "SNCC [Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee] is the most viable part of the southern civil rights movement. Its cadre continually come into conflict with NAACP, CORE [Congress of Racial Equality] and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (King). Its statement of purpose is a credo of nonviolence, but people of different ideologies are not excluded. SNCC does not have a worked out program but their workers condemn the 'black bourgeoisie' and orient toward the poor masses. They have very close ties with SDS, which is practically dominated by YPSL, and with SCEF. SNCC is the left wing of the southern civil rights movement, and it is a movement which we should be a part of."
>
> —"The Negro Struggle and the Crisis of Leadership," reprinted in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5R

The main Civil Rights leadership struggled to bring SNCC into line but failed to dominate it. By the time of the "I Have a Dream" speech, King was largely discredited, and most of the old-line Civil Rights leadership had little influence over the militants of both SNCC and CORE. That failure opened the road for the adoption of the Black Power slogan. SNCC broke from non-violence, and the Deacons for Defense caused the CORE leadership to begin to talk about "protected non-violence." This is not meant to present the militants of SNCC and CORE as revolutionaries (which they were not). They showed a leftward moving impulse, not dominated by King, etc., and were open to revolutionaries.

The noting of Robert Williams, an early heroic figure in the Civil Rights movement, without mention of the mass movement of the 1960s tends to have the effect of re-enforcing the myth of domination by the mainline civil rights leadership. Williams was a relatively isolated individual. It was the contradictions that existed in the civil rights movement as a result of the movement of the black masses that allowed the RT to argue for intervention, and allowed for the early SL to intervene. The civil rights movement of the 1960s was more than militants who were "also produced" as the article states.

Secondly, from the bombing of his house during the Montgomery bus boycott until his assassination, King's nonviolence had little to do with pacifism and much more to do with control of the black masses for the liberal Democrats. The cartoon from *Muhammad Speaks* reprinted with "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom" [1967]

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TROTSKY

LENIN

Bourgeois Democracy, Revolution and Counterrevolution

There is no such thing as "classless" democracy. Bourgeois democracy is a form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Marxists fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat—the triumph over the capitalist exploiters and the establishment of a workers state based on proletarian democracy. Reformists abandon this perspective in systematic adaptation to bourgeois rule, including by backing capitalist counterrevolution in the deformed workers states in the name of "democracy." We reprint below an excerpt from a 1957 polemic by Shane Mage, who became one of the founders of the Spartacist tendency before he subsequently abandoned Marxism. Mage's piece was directed against the right-wing majority of the Young Socialist League (YSL), youth group of Max Shachtman's Independent Socialist League. The Shachtmanite majority's advocacy of "general democratic aims" in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution was an important step in their liquidation into official American social democracy. The Hungarian Revolution was an attempt by the working class—in a workers state where capitalism had been overthrown but political power was in the hands of a Stalinist bureaucracy—to throw off bureaucratic rule and open the road to socialism.

It is no accident that the key phrase in the analysis of the Polish and Hungarian revolutions is "democracy"—not "bourgeois democracy," not "workers democracy," not even "peasant democracy," but plain, unqualified "democracy," "democracy" *in general*. There may be some younger members of the YSL who see nothing wrong with this procedure. I advise all such comrades to study very carefully the writings of Lenin on this subject, notably "State and Revolution" and "Proletarian Revolution and Renegade Kautsky." The key thought, absolutely basic to the Marxist theory of the state, is that any form of government in a class society, including a democracy, essentially embodies the domination ("dictatorship") of one class over the others. This is especially true of workers democracy because the proletariat, inherently a propertyless class, cannot rule except directly and politically, i.e., through its own class organizations of the "soviet" type. Any form of "pure" "classless" democracy "in general" can only express the domination of the economically strongest class, i.e., is necessarily bourgeois democracy....

The *workers council* or *soviet* represents the indicated form for the establishment of workers power in Hungary and, with slight difference of form, in every other country. In a country like Hungary, the creation of councils of working peasants, peasant soviets, would provide a means whereby the peasant majority could be represented in the government while preserving the state power of the proletariat through its class institutions. In scientific terminology, the *state* emerging from the revolution would be a *workers state*; the government would be a *workers and farmers government*.

> —"The YSL Right Wing and the 'Crisis of World Stalinism'" by Shane Mage (1957); reprinted in part in the Spartacist pamphlet, *Solidarność: Polish Company Union for CIA and Bankers* (1981)

On Origin of Howard University

19 January 2009

Dear Comrades:

In the otherwise fine article in *WV* No. 925 (21 November 2008), entitled "Communist Organizing in the Jim Crow South: What's Not in *The Great Debaters*," we say:

> "Nonetheless, black colleges such as Wiley, Morehouse and Howard University were founded by church institutions to primarily train clergy and teachers, the core of the black petty bourgeoisie."

Howard University was founded in 1867, two years after the end of the Civil War, which abolished black chattel slavery. Oliver Otis Howard was a white Christian Civil War Union general from Maine who lost his right arm during the conflict, yet continued to fight in the war. Howard went on to become the commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, an institution of the United States government designed to assist and protect blacks after the war during the period of Reconstruction, the most egalitarian period in U.S. history. As head of the Freedmen's Bureau, Howard was one of the founders of Howard University (named for him), becoming its third president (1869-74). Liberal and religious education departments were central to Howard University at its beginning, but so were the departments of law, pharmacy, medicine, dentistry and music, which all developed within the first 20 years.

It is also important to note that at its start, Howard was open to men and women of all races. "The student body included, in addition to Black and white Americans, Chinese, West Indians, Africans, and American Indians" according to Michael R. Winston's "The Story Behind Howard's Seal" (1976). Howard's original seal includes black and American Indian figures and the original motto of Howard was "Equal Rights and Knowledge For All." This seal and motto lasted for about forty years but both died under the pressure of Jim Crow segregation, a product of the white racist "redeemers" taking power in the South with the defeat of Reconstruction. Howard University survived, but it primarily went on to serve, as it does to this day, to educate elite blacks, whom W.E.B. Du Bois deemed "the talented tenth."

K.S.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The closing date for news in this issue is March 24

No. 933 **27 March 2009**

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, April 2, 6:30 p.m.

Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

For Free Abortion on Demand! For the Right to Gay Marriage... and Divorce!

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room: Rosa Parks E

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

NEW YORK CITY

Wednesday, April 29, 7:45 p.m.

Marxism and Science:

A Tribute to Darwin and the 150th Anniversary of *On the Origin of Species*

Hunter College, West Building, Rm. 407

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

VANCOUVER

Thursday, April 2, 6 p.m.

The Deception of Capitalist Democracy

UBC, Student Union Building, Rm. 42T

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

"Crack Babies" Furor Was Big Lie

Down With Racist "War on Drugs"!

There's a "crack baby epidemic," the press shrieked in the 1980s and '90s. Headlines like "Time Bomb in Cocaine Babies" and "Studies: Future Bleak for Crack Babies" played a key role in whipping up public support for cop invasions of the ghettos in the bipartisan "war on drugs" launched by the Reagan administration. The crack hysteria helped lay the basis for a pervasive demonization of an entire generation of black youth, the evisceration of civil liberties and a vast intensification of police powers, leading to an enormous increase in the prison population. As the bourgeoisie's moral cops cried "crack babies," pregnant black and poor women especially were targeted. Many were secretly tested for drug use in hospitals. Mothers lost custody of their children. Hundreds of women were thrown in jail for supposedly "endangering" their fetuses. In 2001, one woman was even sentenced to 20 years in prison on homicide charges for bearing a stillborn child.

Now, decades after who knows how many lives have been wrecked, the bourgeoisie's main "newspaper of record," the *New York Times*, admits there *never was* any "crack baby epidemic" ("The Epidemic That Wasn't," 27 January). The article quotes researchers who have been "systematically following children who were exposed to cocaine before birth" and states: "So far, these scientists say, the long-term effects of such exposure on children's brain development and behavior appear relatively small." The article points out that the effects of cocaine are "less severe than those of alcohol and are comparable to those of tobacco"—two legal substances enjoyed by many in the general population. (Actually, cocaine is pretty popular too.) The specifically racist character of the anti-drug laws is reflected in the fact that penalties have historically been ***100 times*** harsher for cheap crack, available to the ghetto poor, than for the expensive powdered cocaine favored by middle-class whites.

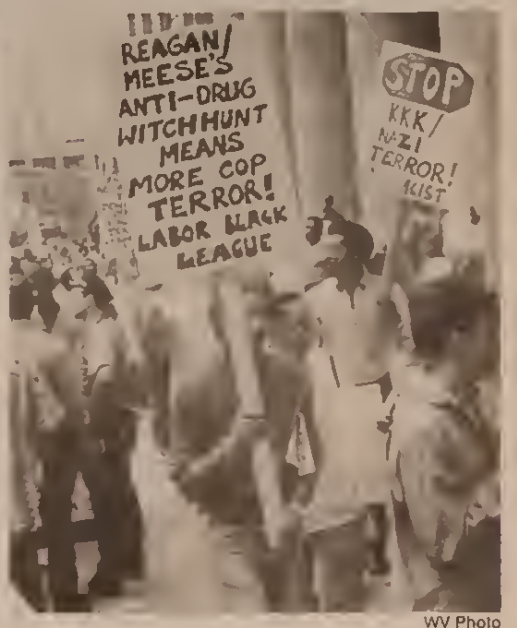
The *New York Times* may have treated it as news, but the phony science of "crack babies" was known over 17 years ago. Within a few years after he first anticipated a developmental problem in the offspring of cocaine addicts, Dr. Ira Chasnoff reported, "Their average developmental functioning level is normal. They are no different from other children growing up" ("The Myth of the 'Crack Babies'," *Boston Globe*, 12 January 1992). Another researcher at the time, Claire Coles of Emory University, accurately described the problems of children born to cocaine users as resulting from black poverty in racist America, not the physiological effects of drug use—e.g., the "crack kid" who couldn't concentrate in class due to hunger, or another who was being raised by a five-year-old sister.

These disclaimers were ignored by the bourgeois rulers and the vast majority of their mouthpieces in the press who promoted the anti-drug witchhunt. At its inception, the bipartisan "war on drugs" was a central part of the bourgeois rulers' efforts to enforce moral conformity to regiment the population during Cold War II against the "godless" Soviet Union. In short order this proved to be a war on black America. Ludicrous tales of how crack cocaine turned its users into raving psychotic killers were central to the bourgeois rulers' push for high-tech weaponry for the racist killer cops, "three strikes" laws and longer prison sentences, elimination of parole, expansion of the racist death penalty and the massive incarceration of black men and women, of whom now nearly a million are imprisoned. Black women were doubly hit by the "crack baby" lies. "Moral Majority" reactionaries claimed "fetus rights" were sacred and that pregnant women were mere vessels, as murderous mobs targeted abortion clinics and hysterical "Satanic ritual" prosecutions shut down day-care centers.

An entire generation of black youth was condemned as "superpredators" who could only be safely housed in prison. This was codified in the 1997 "Juvenile Crime Control Act" signed by Democratic president Bill Clinton, under which juveniles are imprisoned alongside adults. Citing the "crack baby" mythology, right-wing *Washington Post* columnist Charles Krauthammer declared, "The inner-city crack epidemic is now giving birth to the newest horror: a bio-underclass, a generation of physically damaged cocaine babies whose biological inferiority is stamped at birth" (30 July 1989). Similar eugenicist arguments were widely promoted five years later in the *Bell Curve*, which the *New York Times* declared "contains serious scholarship."

continued on page 9

AP



WV Photo

May 1989: Tenants dumped on streets as U.S. Marshals evict residents from some 60 alleged "crack houses" in Washington, D.C. (above). SL and Labor Black League condemn anti-drug witchhunt at 1986 protest in Brooklyn against cop killing of black man.

Driving While Black in Tenaha, Texas

"You can drive into this dusty fleck of a town near the Texas-Louisiana border if you're African-American, but you might not be able to drive out of it—at least not with your car, your cash, your jewelry or other valuables." This is Tenaha, Texas, as described by journalist Howard Witt in the *Chicago Tribune* (10 March). Cops in this Klan-ridden backwater have for years targeted black drivers with out-of-state plates, demanding that they either sign over their belongings to the town or face felony charges of money laundering or other crimes. These included a grandmother who was forced to surrender $4,000 in cash, as well as two people who were obliged to forfeit more than $50,000.

Lawyers in a federal class-action lawsuit have identified nearly 200 cases between 2006 and 2008 of police seizing cash, jewelry, cell phones and even automobiles from motorists. For example, the Boatrights, a mixed-race family, were pulled over by the police for supposedly driving in a left-turn lane. The police threatened to turn the Boatrights' children over to Child Protective Services if the couple didn't hand over the $6,000 they had on hand. Jennifer Boatright later declared: "We figured we better give them our cash and get the hell out of there."

This is far from being the dirty secret of a few corrupt cops. In fact, the property seized through terror and intimidation in Tenaha is officially used to pay police salaries. In Texas, as in many other states, state law allows police to seize assets based solely on the cops' "suspicion" that they are being used to commit a crime. Witt, whose article brought the issue to national attention, reported that "according to a prominent state legislator, police agencies across Texas are wielding the asset-forfeiture law more aggressively to supplement their shrinking operating budgets."

The raw racism and brazen corruption in Tenaha reflect in crude form the daily workings of American capitalism. The capitalist state, consisting at its core of the cops, courts, prisons and military, is nothing more than an apparatus of organized violence to maintain the rule of the capitalist class against those they exploit and oppress. In this country, founded on chattel slavery, class oppression comes wrapped in the envelope of racism, which is especially raw in the states of the former Confederacy.

And all the more so in locales such as rural Texas. In 1999 in the Texas panhandle town of Tulia, 42 people, including half of the adult black male population, were framed up and imprisoned on transparently false drug charges. Just down Route 96 from Tenaha is Jasper, Texas, where in 1998 KKK race-terrorists killed James Byrd Jr. by dragging him behind a pickup truck. Across the Louisiana border is Jena, which is notorious for the Jim Crow justice meted out against six black high school students who defended themselves after sitting under a "whites only" tree outside their school in 2007. When East Texas cops beat to death Loyal Garner Jr. in 1987, we wrote: "Some hellholes are so irremediably backward and racist that it will take the equivalent of Sherman's march to the sea to make them fit for habitation" ("Loyal Garner Was Victim of Racist Murder!" *WV* No. 458, 29 July 1988).

Tenaha officials seek to justify their racist rip-off scheme by portraying it as part of a fight against "drug trafficking." Likewise, Texas's "Border Star" program, supposedly aimed at drug smuggling, has targeted thousands of Latino drivers near the Mexican border for invasive searches and harassment. The chiefs of three of the law enforcement agencies involved in "Operation Border Star" have been implicated in or convicted of organized crime charges. This is the stark reality of the "war on drugs," a racist war against blacks, Latinos and other minorities.

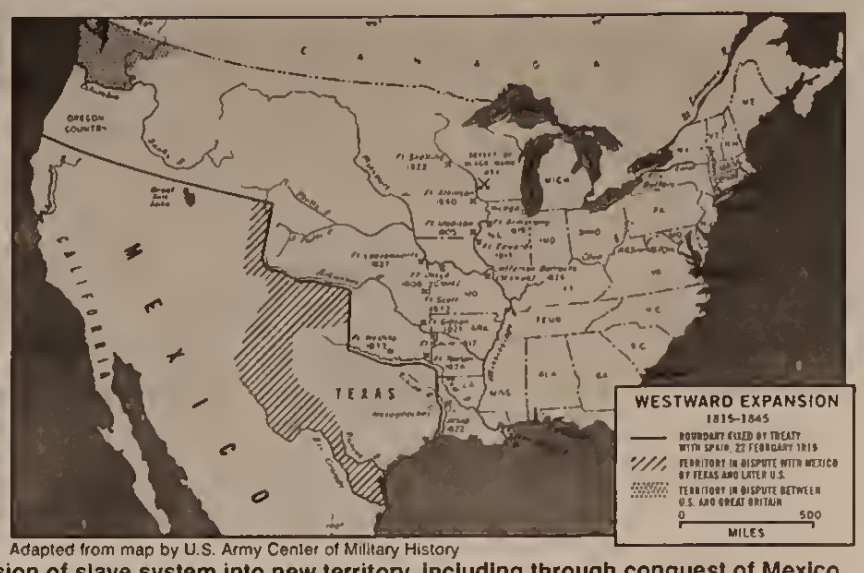
Past masters at inflaming every variety of backward prejudice and bigotry to keep working people atomized and divided, the racist American rulers have embarked on an anti-immigrant crusade, seeking to maintain a population of immigrant workers without legal rights who can be deported at any time. Barack Obama fed into this anti-immigrant frenzy through his calls during the presidential election campaign for increased "security" on the already heavily militarized Mexican border. As the despised *la migra* immigration authorities have carried out raids and deportations, breaking up families and destroying lives, Obama simply objected that they are "ineffective."

As the newly elected chief executive of U.S. capitalism, Obama has done the bourgeoisie a great service by reburbishing illusions in capitalist "democracy." The purpose of executive officials, from the mayor of Tenaha to the top cop of U.S. imperialism, is to administer capitalist class rule. Black president or not, America is America—racist, brutal, violent. The "end of racism" myth, a central theme in Obama's presidential campaign, is a cruel hoax, as is Obama's contention that the civil rights movement brought America "90 percent of the way" toward racial equality.

The key to confronting the forces of racist reaction in the South lies in the mobilization of the multiracial working class. This requires a political fight against the pro-capitalist labor tops, not least to organize the open shop South. This is part of the struggle to forge a workers party that acts as a tribune of the people and fights for a workers government. Just as it took a revolutionary war to overthrow the Southern slaveowners, it will take a workers revolution to overthrow the capitalist class and bring about black liberation. ■

MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

Illinois State University



Adapted from map by U.S. Army Center of Military History

U.S. troops invade Monterrey, 1846. Southern slavocracy sought expansion of slave system into new territory, including through conquest of Mexico.

PRELUDE TO AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

We print below, edited for publication, a presentation by Jacob Zorn of the Spartacist League at a February 28 New York City forum.

PART ONE

This forum is being held in celebration of Black History Month. This is the first time that there is a black president of the United States, which in its own way is historic, especially given the history of black oppression in this country. American imperialism is bogged down in two increasingly unpopular wars and occupations abroad and an economic crisis that deepens each day. Thus, for the bourgeoisie, the fact that there is now a black president, not to mention a president who can put together an English sentence, is used to try to give a facelift to this brutal system, in order to refurbish its very threadbare "democratic" credentials —even as the capitalists plan to jack up brutal exploitation and oppression here and abroad.

Voting for the Democratic Party is counterposed to the interests of the working class and oppressed. During the elections, the Spartacist League called to break with the Democrats and for a class-struggle workers party. We did not vote for the Democrats. Nor do we think that a black president will serve to eliminate racial oppression here in the United States. Black oppression is deeply rooted in the history of the development of capitalism here, and only socialist revolution, which places the wealth of society in the hands of the multiracial working class, can liberate black people and all of the oppressed. This is why we call to finish the Civil War and for black liberation through socialist revolution.

In 1846, the United States invaded Mexico. When the United States finally left, it was only after forcing Mexico to give up about half of its national territory, including all or most of modern-day California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Nevada, as well as Texas. In this forum, I want to look at how the oppression of black people here in the United States is rooted in the history of the United States, how the U.S. invasion of Mexico was a key part of this history, and how workers struggles in the United States and Mexico are inextricably linked.

The war was fought by the Southern slavocracy in order to further the expansion of the slave system into new land, as a way of solidifying the slave system's domination of this country. The United States in the early 19th century was integrated into the developing world capitalist system, and the North had begun to develop into a very dynamic capitalist power. But this growth was hampered by the slave system in the South, which dominated the U.S. politically and economically. This coexistence of slavery and capitalism could not continue indefinitely. By the middle of the 19th century, what was called the "irrepressible conflict" came ever closer to breaking out into the open. The U.S. invasion of Mexico was an important signpost in the lead-up to the Civil War. As Marx put it in an article he wrote in 1861, during the Civil War:

> "The present struggle between the South and the North is, therefore, nothing but a struggle between two social systems, the system of slavery and the system of free labour. The struggle has broken out because the two systems can no longer live peacefully side by side on the North American continent. It can only be ended by the victory of one system or the other."
>
> —"The Civil War in the United States" (1861)

Here in the United States, the invasion of Mexico is often either ignored or justified as inevitable; this was certainly my experience growing up in Arizona, which is part of the land taken from Mexico. In Mexico the war is much better known. No town or village is complete without its memorial or street dedicated to the "Boy Heroes" who fought against the U.S. There, the invasion is used to bolster Mexican nationalism, with its premise that the country needs to stand as one, regardless of class differences, to maintain eternal vigilance against the monolithic aggressor across the Río Bravo. As Marxists here in the "belly of the beast," it is necessary to oppose any instance of U.S. aggression toward Latin America and to stand for the class solidarity of the working class throughout the Americas—to fight for workers revolutions throughout the continent, from Alaska to Argentina. Part of this is understanding the 1846 invasion of Mexico and why it happened.

At the same time, it is important to understand the class forces that contributed to the invasion. Yes, on the part of the United States the war was based on a desire to take over Mexican land, with a good deal of anti-Mexican, anti-indigenous and anti-Catholic bigotry thrown in. But more fundamentally, the invasion of Mexico was developed out of the historic division of the United States between capitalist and slave systems. This very division led, less than 20 years later, to America's second revolution, the Civil War, which smashed the Southern slave system and paved the way for the unfettered development of capitalism in the United States.

For us, as for Marx and Engels, not to mention Frederick Douglass and the millions of slaves in the South, the Civil War was a just war on the side of the North. This is ABC. It's embarrassing that one has to assert this, but it still seems to be far beyond the grasp of many even so-called Marxists, like for example the Progressive Labor Party. They recently debated for several months about the Civil War in the pages of *Challenge*—and seemed never to have really reached a conclusion (see "PL vs. Karl Marx (and Abraham Lincoln)," *WV* No. 919, 29 August 2008). For us, the problem is that the task of black liberation was not completed, and black oppression remains integral to American capitalism.

In order to understand this, it's necessary to understand the role of slavery in the early United States. The basic task of a bourgeois revolution is to create a unified bourgeois nation: in this sense, the first American Revolution was incomplete. During the War of Independence against Britain, the "founding fathers," both in the North and in the South, agreed that the 13 colonies would be better off outside the control of the British Empire. But they represented different propertied classes: the budding Northern bourgeoisie and the Southern slaveholding landowners. In 1776, both the Northern merchant capitalists and the Southern planter aristocracy supported independence from the British imperial system, and for several decades it was beneficial for both to coexist in the same economy and the same country.

The new republic was not an equal partnership—the Southern slavocracy was in control. Without understanding this, the entire first half of American history doesn't make a lot of sense. Increasing cotton production in the 19th century clinched a common economic interest between the plantation owners of the South and the Northern bankers and merchants who profited from the export of cotton to Britain and its manufacture into goods. The "slave power" of the Declaration of Independence and the American Revolution was codified a decade later in the U.S. Constitution, which was written in 1787.

When he was running for president, Barack Obama claimed "the answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution." This is a lie, while the Constitution never actually uses the word "slave," it gave the slave South extra power, despite the fact that its

FINISH THE CIVIL WAR! FOR BLACK LIBERATION THROUGH SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

population grew at a much slower rate than the free North. The "three-fifths clause" not only declared a slave three-fifths of a person, but also gave slaveowners extra power within the electoral system. And then there is the Senate, which gives each state the same representation regardless of its population. And when the Constitution was written, the Senate was not elected. Southerners held the presidency more often than not for most of the history of the early United States. This made it all but impossible to legally abolish slavery. Thus both in economic terms and in political terms, human slavery was the cornerstone of the early American republic.

Slavery eventually died out in the North, where the last state to abolish slavery was New Jersey in 1846. By the mid 19th century, Northern capitalism had developed to such a point that it was increasingly fettered by the Southern slavocracy. The envelope for this tension was often expansionism. From the original 13 colonies, the United States had already grown extensively, especially with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Both the slave South and the capitalist North shared expansionist aims. This was later called "Manifest Destiny." But this expansion meant different things for each section. Northern capitalists and farmers wanted to expand to the west. This included much of what was then called Oregon—which is not only the current state of Oregon but also much of western Canada, which was claimed by Britain. They wanted to expand a market for manufactured goods, obtain raw materials, develop a hinterland for the North, and expand toward Asian markets through the Pacific Rim.

The Southern slaveowners wanted to expand the slave system and deepen its power over the country in order to guarantee that slavery would continue to exist. Immigration and population growth in the North threatened to offset the three-fifths clause, and new free states would mean less power for the slave South in Congress. So politicians from both sides concocted a series of so-called "compromises" to maintain the North/South balance. One example is the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which divided the Louisiana Territory into slave and free zones.

No sooner had one "compromise" been effected than the next crisis would arise. In 1861, after the Civil War broke out, Marx explained this:

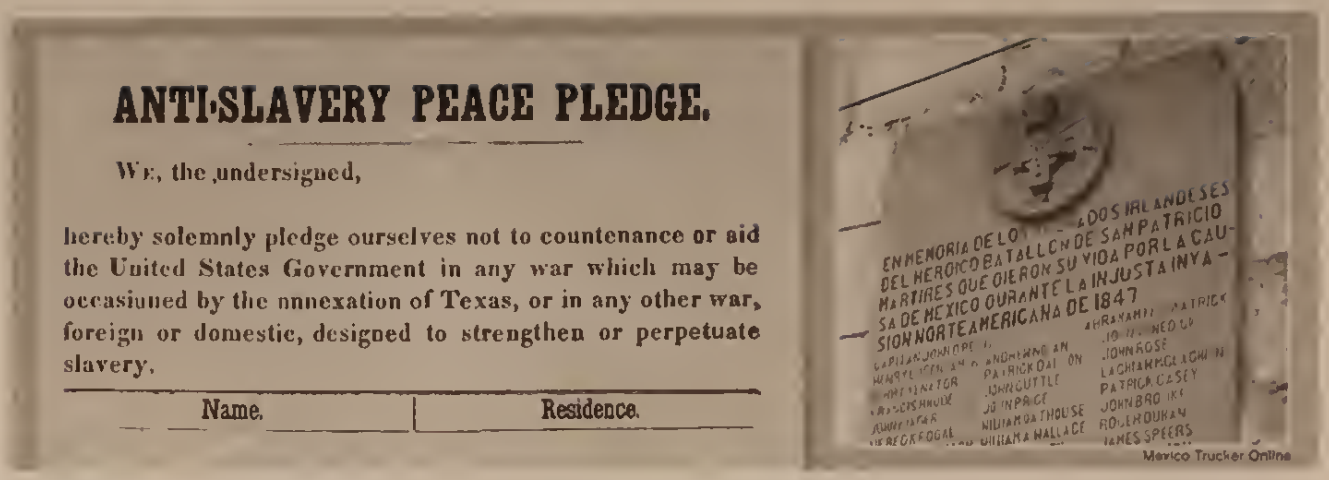
> "The progressive abuse of the Union by the slave power, working through its alliance with the Northern Democratic party, is, so to say, the general formula of United States history since the beginning of this century. The successive compromise measures mark the successive degrees of the encroachment by which the Union became more and more transformed into the slave of the slave-owner. Each of these compromises denotes a new encroachment of the South, a new concession of the North."
>
> —"The American Question in England" (1861)

The Democratic Party at the time was, in the South, the main party of the slaveholders. In the North, it comprised both merchant capitalists who traded with the South and the urban poor. In both regions, it was thoroughly racist.

Plantation-based cotton agriculture is very hard on the soil, especially as it was practiced in the South. Therefore the slavocracy had a constant demand for new land. Many Southerners wanted to create what they called an "empire for slavery," which would include much of Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to make sure that there would always be plantation slavery in the United States. British military power was an obstacle to the North's wish to expand to the northwest in Oregon, but Mexico appeared to be a scintillating morsel to the slave South.

Mexico After Independence

Both the U.S. and Mexico bore the marks of their colonizing powers. British North America, including later the United States, was largely based on the mercantile model of Britain, which was by the mid 18th century one of the most dynamic European economies and the first industrial capitalist country. Spain by this time was one of the most backward and bankrupt European powers; it had already squandered the wealth that it had taken from its American colonies. Rather than develop the productive forces of New Spain, the Spanish crown focused on getting as much gold and silver from its colony as it could and sending this wealth back to the Iberian Peninsula. Between 1808 and 1821, Spain was beset by various problems in Europe, and it lost control of its empire. Almost all of its American colonies became independent in this period, the exceptions being Cuba and Puerto Rico, which remained Spanish colonies until the United States took them in the Spanish-American War in the late 1890s.



Opposition to U.S. war against Mexico. Left: Peace pledge published in abolitionist newspaper *The Liberator*, 18 July 1845. Right: Monument in Mexico City to Irish-American soldiers who defected to Mexican side during war and formed the San Patricio Battalion.

I want to touch on African slavery in Mexico for a moment. The Spanish were in fact the first European power in the Americas to use African slaves. And the Spanish colonies in the Caribbean, such as Santo Domingo, were based on slavery. The first black slaves arrived in Mexico with Hernán Cortés, and slaves were important in early colonial Mexico—something that is often ignored by contemporary Mexican nationalists. But the main source of labor in Mexico was indigenous peasants, not African slaves, and by the 19th century slavery had died out in Mexico. So at its independence, Mexico abolished slavery, but this was more a symbolic than a real act—except, as we'll see, in Texas.

Shortly after its independence in 1821, Mexico was crippled by the legacy of Spanish colonialism, which had left the country underdeveloped and economically weak and heavily indebted. Mexico was very unstable; it had no real central government. Its extreme southern territories, including modern-day Guatemala, and its far northern territories were not under control of Mexico City. Between independence in 1821 and 1861, Mexico had 56 presidents, suffered several coups, and faced invasions by Spain in 1829 and France in 1838 in addition to the U.S. invasion in 1846. Mexico, in short, was not a modern nation-state. Local *caciques* opposed central control and political power alternated between Federalists who favored a decentralized government and conservative Centralists who wanted to place power in the hands of the government in Mexico City. One of the central figures in this period was the adventurer General Antonio López de Santa Anna, who himself ruled Mexico eleven times.

The U.S. had long had its eyes on Latin America. One example of this was the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, which told European countries to keep their hands off the Western Hemisphere. Mexico—or as the Spanish colonialists called it, New Spain—was particularly enticing for the United States. At the same time, the United States was pulling northern Mexico into its economy, and central Mexico was very distant. Just to give an example, one of the largest settlements in far northern Mexico was Santa Fe, New Mexico, and it took 60 days to get to Santa Fe from Missouri. But to get to Santa Fe from Mexico City it took some six months! As the Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz allegedly put it almost a century later, Mexico was so far from God and so close to the United States.

U.S. Army occupies Mexico City in September 1847.

Texas

I want to talk a bit about Texas, because it's quite important. By the 19th century, Spain had already lost its territories in Florida and Louisiana. In 1819, the U.S. had signed a treaty with Spain, the Adams-Onís Treaty that established the boundary between the U.S. and Spanish territory at the Sabine River, and the U.S. renounced "forever" any claim to Texas—but Spain was still worried that its sparsely populated northern territory was vulnerable. So to populate the northern part of its territory, the Spanish government encouraged English-speaking North Americans, so-called Anglos, who were mainly citizens of the United States, to settle in Texas. The newly independent Mexican government continued the same policy. These immigrants were required to formally convert to Catholicism, which was the only legal religion in Mexico at the time, and the idea was that they would become Mexicans. But many of the immigrants had very little intention of actually doing so. Instead, they were mainly Southerners who wanted to extend slavery as far as possible into Mexican territory.

The first large-scale Anglo settlement in Texas was founded by Moses Austin and his son Stephen. By 1825, it had 1,800 inhabitants; 443 of them were slaves. Soon, Anglo immigrants and slaves outnumbered Mexicans in Texas ten-to-one, although it's important to keep in mind that Native Americans outnumbered both. The links between far northern and central Mexico diminished even more as trade with the increasingly dynamic United States grew, and the Mexican government was too weak to force the Americans in Texas to do much of anything.

Slavery was a very special issue in this relationship. It was illegal in Mexico but was central to the economy in Texas, just as it was in the economy in the Southern United States. The Mexican government saw limiting slavery as a way to rein in these settlers, and it repeatedly reasserted

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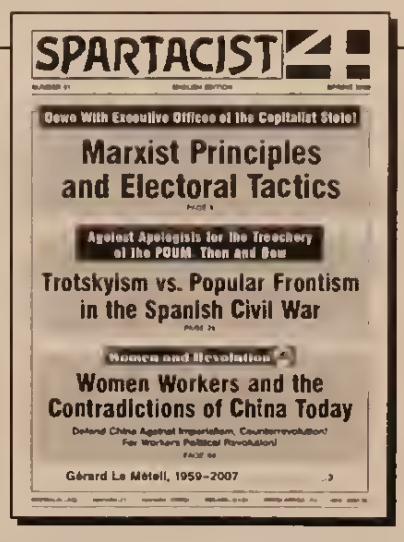

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Mexican-American War...

(continued from page 5)

its opposition to slavery, while not doing much to actually limit its practice in Texas. In 1829, the Mexican president Vicente Guerrero abolished slavery but allowed Texas to maintain slavery as long as no more slaves were admitted. The Texans got around even this by forcing their slaves to sign so-called "contracts" with their masters that virtually guaranteed their perpetual servitude.

The Texas "Revolution": Pro-Slavery Coup d'Etat

There's a lot of mythology about what's called the "Texas Revolution" of 1835-36, in which Texas broke away from Mexico. But at bottom this was a slaveholders' rebellion, fought to guarantee the existence of human slavery. Sometimes it is depicted as a reaction to a growing Mexican central government—

Harper's Weekly

Ulysses S. Grant as lieutenant in the Mexican-American War, 1846.

this is what I was told when I visited the Alamo several years ago. I haven't forgotten. But as veteran American Trotskyist Richard S. Fraser put it in an unpublished study of the development of black oppression in the United States, "The colonists didn't care what government sat in Mexico City as long as slavery was tolerated. What they feared was that a stronger central government would most assuredly move against their practice of slavery." Stephen Austin, a founder of Texas, himself argued: "Texas must be a slave country." And in fact, as a state, Texas would become fervently pro-slavery and joined the Confederacy in the Civil War. The University of Texas has something called the "Handbook of Texas Online" and it describes:

> "The Texas Revolution assured slaveholders of the future of their institution. The Constitution of the Republic of Texas (1836) provided that slaves would remain the property of their owners, that the Texas Congress could not prohibit the immigration of slaveholders bringing their property, and that slaves could be imported from the United States (although not from Africa). Given those protections, slavery expanded rapidly during the period of the republic."

Many slaves in Texas saw the Mexican army during the so-called "revolution" as an army of liberation. Since Mexico had abolished slavery, slaves in independent Texas escaped to the south. As one former slave put it: "All we had to do was *walk*, but walk south and we'd be free as soon as we crossed the Rio Grande. In Mexico you could be free." At least 4,000 slaves escaped to Mexico in the 1840s and 1850s.

The Texans of course defeated General Santa Anna in 1836 and won de facto independence, although it's a funny type of independence, because as soon as they became independent many Texans wanted to join the United States. The slavocracy wanted to annex Texas, but to do so threatened to undo the balance between the North and South and also to provoke war with Mexico, which did not recognize Texas's independence.

"Manifest Destiny"

Now as I mentioned earlier, there was a shared expansionism in both the North and the South. This was called Manifest Destiny, the idea that God had a unique plan for white, English-speaking, Protestant North Americans to conquer and "civilize" all of America. By the 1840s, the slavocracy and the Northern capitalists were increasingly at odds over the nature of this destiny, of this expansionism. To the North, it was tied to the growth of capitalism, the expansion of free labor and markets and more influence in Congress. Oregon, as I said, was very important. To the South, expansionism meant increasing the reach of slavery and bolstering its power in government. The more the country expanded, the greater the tensions between slavery and capitalism became.

At the time, Texas remained a lightning rod. Many Southerners were anxious that Britain would try to make Texas a client state and abolish slavery there. James Polk, a Southern Democrat, was elected president in 1844 as a militant advocate of Manifest Destiny. Polk, like many American presidents, was a representative of the slavocracy: he owned a 920-acre plantation and 34 slaves—he bought 19 of them while he was president of the United States. According to historian Joseph Wheelan, he was "an unrepentant slaveholder" who "as a congressman had consistently sided with Southern interests in blocking attempts to interfere with slavery" (*Invading Mexico: America's Continental Dream and the Mexican War, 1846-1848* [2007]). In his presidential campaign, Polk promised to expand into Oregon and to annex Texas. In 1845, under this pressure, lame-duck president John Tyler—himself a slaveholder from Virginia—announced the annexation of Texas.

This was a provocation against both Mexico and the Northern free states and would lead to a war with each. The pretext for invading Mexico was the border between Mexico and Texas. The border between Texas and the rest of Mexico had always been the Río Nueces, but after annexing Texas, the United States claimed that the border was actually the Río Bravo del Norte (called the Rio Grande in the United States), which is some 160 miles to the south. This not only meant making Texas bigger, but also it expanded the U.S. claim to much of New Mexico as well, which concretely meant the possibility of creating several more slave states. In his *Personal Memoirs*, former president Ulysses S. Grant, who fought in Mexico, argued, "The fact is, annexationists wanted more territory than they could possibly lay any claim to, as part of the new acquisition."

The Invasion

The U.S. provoked a war with Mexico by stationing troops in this disputed area and then, when an American soldier was killed, claiming that, in Polk's words, "American blood has been shed on American soil." This was the first in a list of lies that have been used by the U.S. to justify invasions of different countries—the USS *Maine* (Cuba), the Gulf of Tonkin (Vietnam) and most recently supposed "weapons of mass destruction" (Iraq).

In the war, the U.S. had a three-pronged strategy. Stephen Watts Kearny invaded westward, into New Mexico and California (the latter with John C. Frémont). Zachary Taylor invaded northern Mexico, occupying Monterrey, and Winfield Scott invaded Mexico City from the Caribbean port city of Veracruz. Polk wanted a short war; he feared that if the war lasted too long, Taylor and Scott, who were Whigs, would become too popular. However, the war lasted longer than he expected, since Mexico did not surrender until forced to. The Marine Corps' hymn still celebrates this invasion, asserting the U.S power in the "Halls of Montezuma," that is to say, in Mexico City.

A. Hoffy

Antonio López de Santa Anna, adventurer, general and eleven-time president of Mexico.

of the superior organization and wealth of the United States. Incidentally, Karl Marx thought that the United States won despite its leadership. He called General Scott "a common, petty, untalented, carping, envious cur and humbug." The Mexican army was officer heavy; at one point, Santa Anna commanded an army of 24,000 officers and only 20,000 enlisted men. According to historian Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, the "conditions of the [Mexican] army were disastrous, it was tired, poorly fed and unarmed, it was large but untrained and confronted an army that was small, but disciplined, equipped, fed and regularly paid" (*De la Rebelión de Texas a la Guerra del 47* [1994]). One thing I'll mention about the U.S. side, it should be noted that many Catholic Irish and German immigrants in the U.S. Army resented the Protestant leadership, and there were even Irish-American soldiers who defected to

Jürgen Buchenau

Monument to the "Boy Heroes" on outskirts of Mexico City.

The war served as a testing ground for future military leaders in the Civil War and was the first war in which West Point graduates played a key role. From Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson on the Confederate side to George McClellan and U.S. Grant on the Union side, most of the commanding officers in the Civil War had fought in the invasion of Mexico.

Many of these officers had very different takes on the war. In the case of Grant, he later called the war "one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation." To use one example, there's the northern city of Monterrey, which was occupied for almost two years. Historian Miguel Ángel González Quiroga describes how "the city was subjected to a furious onslaught unlike any it has witnessed before or since. The fighting left devastation and ruin that converted the town, in the words of one eyewitness, into a vast cemetery."

Even though Mexico had a larger army, the U.S. won the war. This was a reflection not of Manifest Destiny but Mexico, forming the San Patricio Battalion. Remember that during the 19th century, anti-Irish and anti-Catholic bigotry was rife in the U.S.

Furthermore, the Mexican government was divided; it was unstable and unable to mobilize the resources necessary to fend off the United States. Mexican soldiers—largely indigenous and mestizo peasants—had little incentive to fight for a largely white landlord class of *hacendados*. During the war, there were numerous changes of government in Mexico itself and there were rebellions, for example, in southern Mexico. As many as 200,000 people died or were dislocated in the so-called Caste War of Yucatán by 1848. The Mexican army was used to attacking other Mexicans, not fighting foreign armies. The U.S. also had better artillery. And to top it all off, Mexico was led by General Santa Anna—who was more concerned with holding on to his own power than winning the war. And as we will see, the war itself was not popular in the Northern part of the United States.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

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South Africa...

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until the non-white majority has power in a workers state that would unite the many black tribal- and language-based groups along with the coloured and Indian populations, with ample room and full democratic rights for those whites who would join in building a society based on genuine equality.

Tripartite Alliance Oversees Masses' Misery

It is a measure of the hellish conditions of life in South Africa that some 1,000 people die of AIDS every day. The health care system is criminally neglected—a problem compounded by the enormity of ignorance promoted by government officials. Mbeki was infamous for denying that HIV causes AIDS. Zuma reinforced backward attitudes and ignorance about AIDS by stating during his 2006 rape trial that he took a shower after having sex with an HIV-positive woman to prevent himself from becoming infected. As part of the ANC-led government, the SACP tops bear responsibility for the government's attacks on workers and the poor as well as the criminal neglect of those suffering from AIDS and HIV. The current government has verbally disassociated itself from Mbeki's denialism. But the fact of the matter is that the vast majority of people who need anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) lack access to or cannot afford them. For four months beginning last November, more than 15,000 people needing ARVs in Orange Free State were denied them because the province had run out of its supply, and many patients there are still waiting to receive them. We demand free ARVs for all HIV/AIDS patients as part of the struggle for free quality health care for all!

Meanwhile, starting in 2004 in Orange Free State, protests over the lack of "service delivery"—housing, electricity, basic sanitation, roads—have spread to virtually all the black townships in the country. On March 8, Zuma was confronted during his door-to-door campaign in a township in Mpumalanga province by angry residents. He sat motionless as Sthembile Nkosi, a single mother of one, told him she did not register to vote because nothing has changed in the past 15 years. "We are promised a better life, but we only see the better life on TV," she scolded. Among the residents' many grievances is the spread of disease due to lack of proper sanitation. With one toilet for every four families, and most of these blocked, people are forced to relieve themselves in the bush. While the recent cholera epidemic in Zimbabwe has taken thousands of lives, many parts of South Africa have also been hit by cholera because they lack clean water supplies and working sanitation systems.

Such conditions can be seen throughout the desolate rural areas as well as in shacks and squatter camps in urban townships. People have been on waiting lists for government-provided houses as far back as 1996. Much of the coloured population—descended from a mixture of Malays brought to the Cape Colony as slaves, whites, indigenous Khoi and San peoples and others—lives in utter destitution in townships like Crossroads and Uitsig in the Western Cape. In and around Durban, where the Indian component of the proletariat is centred, a good number of Indians also live in shacks, sometimes right next to mansions.

The power of the trade unions, based on labour's role in producing the wealth of society, must be wielded in defence of the township and rural masses, most of whom are unemployed or only marginally employed. In the absence of such a class-struggle fight, disillusionment and anger can take starkly reactionary forms, as seen in the pogromist anti-immigrant violence that took 62 lives last May. Responsibility for anti-immigrant violence must be placed squarely on the Tripartite Alliance government, which presides over the capitalist system that keeps the vast majority in wretched conditions and brutally oppresses immigrants.

de Ras/The Star

Government-backed anti-immigrant violence: Cops stand guard at gates of refugee camp north of Pretoria, March 2. The immigrants were evicted, and the camp burned, bulldozed and torn down.

On March 2, the government tore down the last camp in Gauteng province housing immigrants displaced by the pogroms. Cops beat and pepper-sprayed the refugees while the camp outside Pretoria was literally burned to the ground. Women and children slept outside after being refused entry into the Lindela Repatriation Centre, where immigrants are routinely humiliated and brutalised, as the only other choice the state gave them was to return to the townships where they might well be killed with impunity. At the same time, hundreds of Zimbabweans displaced by the closing of a refugee camp in Limpopo province headed to Johannesburg's Central Methodist Church, already jam-packed with people who fled the May pogroms. Durban ANC ward councillor Vusi Khoza is facing charges of murder, assault and robbery after a January mob attack on foreign nationals claimed the lives of a Tanzanian and a Zimbabwean.

Gideon Mendel

HIV patients at Palmerton Clinic, Eastern Cape, 2004. Government's criminal neglect of HIV/AIDS epidemic has exacerbated crisis in which some 1,000 die every day.

Adding fuel to these fires, COSATU leader Zwelinzima Vavi ranted at an ANC election rally in Sebokeng, near Johannesburg: "There is no country in the world where borders are as uncontrolled as here" (*Daily Sun*, 10 March). In an interview in the *Sunday Independent* (15 March), Vavi "explained" his statement by complaining that "the Fishmonger restaurant in Illovo [a Johannesburg suburb] employs 53 people, only seven of whom are South Africans." Condemning "foreign" workers for "stealing jobs" is the common coin of trade-union bureaucrats throughout the capitalist world, often serving to incite reactionary violence. Vavi's poisonous diatribes show the real face of the nationalism of the COSATU tops and their political patrons in the SACP, whatever their sermonising against "xenophobia."

Proletarian militants must fight against any attempt to channel workers' anger over poverty and unemployment into anti-immigrant racism and other devices—from tribalism to bigotry against women and gays—used by the capitalists to divide the working class and weaken its struggles. This is especially crucial as tens of thousands lose their jobs in mining and manufacturing due to the world economic crisis, adding to an unemployment rate already over 40 per cent. As we did last May, Spartacist South Africa raises the demands: Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations! (see "South Africa: Mobilize Trade Unions Against Anti-Immigrant Terror!" *WV* No. 915, 23 May 2008). The courts have granted the right to vote to expatriates, many of them whites who left South Africa after the ANC's rise to power. We say that immigrants and refugees who live in South Africa must get the vote.

Deepening social inequality and enduring tribal/ethnic divisions and white privilege give the lie to the "nation-building" myth propounded by the SACP tops. Socialist revolution will be the supreme act of national liberation for the oppressed majority of this country. We do not accept as sacrosanct the borders drawn by the colonialists. Our call is for a socialist federation of southern Africa, which will lay the basis for overcoming the region's national and ethnic divisions that are the legacy of colonial and apartheid rule. Immigrant workers will play a crucial role in carrying out this revolutionary perspective.

This programme is based on the theory of permanent revolution developed by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Russian October Revolution of 1917. As Trotsky explained in regard to countries of belated capitalist development, the tasks of social and economic modernisation as well as national liberation can be achieved only through the seizure of power by the proletariat. The necessary precondition for revolutionary struggle is the complete political independence of the proletariat from the bourgeoisie. There is no wall separating the democratic and socialist tasks of the revolution. Rather, the working class in power would be faced with the socialist reconstruction of society.

Key to the defence of such a revolution from capitalist counterrevolutionary attacks will be its international extension to especially the imperialist centres of West Europe, Japan and North America, the only road to achieving a world socialist order based on material abundance. Many militants in South Africa believe that a workers revolution would inevitably be crushed by the imperialists and write off the possibility that the workers in North America, Europe and Japan will ever overthrow their "own" capitalist rulers. No one would deny that the U.S. and other capitalist powers represent a formidable obstacle to proletarian revolutions. But as we wrote in the April 2008 ICL pamphlet, *The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution*:

> "The imperialist countries are class-divided societies with deep discontents and insoluble contradictions, necessarily leading to class and other social struggles. In the course of sharp class struggle and through the instrumentality of a revolutionary party that patiently educates the working class in the understanding not only of its social power but of its historic interests, the workers will become conscious of themselves as a class fighting for itself and for all the oppressed against the capitalist order"

The Economic Crisis and the Elections

Despite all the evidence of disaffection with the ANC, it is likely that it will win the elections with a healthy majority. The ANC's bourgeois opponents are currently up in arms over press reports that the National Prosecuting Authority will drop corruption charges against Zuma, who in any case is due to become president after April 22.

The enduring mass support for the ANC testifies above all to the treachery of the SACP and COSATU misleaders in tying the powerful proletariat to this bourgeois party, which they falsely portray as the embodiment of national liberation. The SACP packages its class-collaborationist alliance with the ANC as the "national democratic revolution"—the South African variant of the "two-stage revolution" doctrine that the party inherited from the degenerating Communist International under Stalin and Bukharin in the late 1920s. The SACP is what Lenin called a bourgeois workers party: a party with a working-class base and a thoroughly pro-capitalist leadership and programme. Key to building a Leninist vanguard party will be splitting revolutionary-minded SACP members from their reformist tops.

Following Zuma's election as ANC

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president, the SACP/COSATU tops declared that their role in the "reconfigured" Alliance would be to ensure that workers' interests are met. But as we wrote following Mbeki's removal as South African president, "The victory that SACP spokesmen have claimed with Mbeki's ouster may come at a high price, as the current ANC/SACP/COSATU leadership will now be viewed as more directly responsible for the privations of workers and the poor.... With the capitalist world entering into recession, the government will come under pressure to *cut* expenditures on social programmes, not expand them" ("ANC Palace Coup Rattles South Africa," *WV* No. 922, 10 October 2008).

Now the world economic recession is clobbering South Africa, whose economy is based on the export of mining products and other commodities. Anthony Butler noted in *Business Day* (9 March): "The hope aroused by Jacob Zuma's elevation to the highest office in the land—and the now plainly unrealisable promises the African National Congress (ANC) has made along the way—will shortly collide with rising unemployment, deepening poverty and the end of food security." Butler warned, "The default mechanism of social control—state coercion—is likely quickly to come into play."

The ANC has already toned down its promises of greater benefits, and the SACP/COSATU bureaucrats will say that their hands are tied because of the economic meltdown. Zuma is talking about the need for workers to make "sacrifices," including donating a day's pay to a fund to mitigate the effects of retrenchments (layoffs). Meanwhile, hand in hand with their role in the capitalist government, the SACP reformists participate in NEDLAC (National Economic, Development and Labour Council) and other commissions of government, labour and capitalists, where they are haggling over just how many workers should lose their jobs.

During the 1930s Great Depression, the 1938 Transitional Programme, written by Trotsky as the founding document of the Fourth International, answered demands that workers pay for the capitalist crisis. The document raised such demands as a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to provide jobs for all and a sliding scale of wages to keep pace with inflation, declaring: "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish."

The global crisis underlines the unity of class interests of the international proletariat. The nationalism and class collaborationism of the SACP/COSATU bureaucrats are *counterposed* to those interests. While occasionally giving verbal support to workers' struggles in other countries, the SACP/COSATU misleaders promote nationalist protectionism, based on the lie that South Africa's capitalist exploiters and their wage slaves have common "national interests." "Buy local" protectionism sets up foreign workers as scapegoats for capitalist crises and helps foment anti-immigrant violence.

Mogaki/Sowetan

Black children face miserable conditions at school in Orlando East, Soweto, October 2008.

SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande is now calling for tougher trade policies, denouncing in particular the amount of Chinese exports to South Africa (*Business Day*, 2 March). Here Nzimande is joining the labour traitors in the U.S. and other capitalist countries who wield protectionist poison against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. The ICL stands for the unconditional military defence of China against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, we call for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy and create a regime of workers democracy dedicated to the fight for world socialist revolution.

Workers are increasingly angry about their leaders using the unions as stepping stones to build credentials for careers in Parliament and business. COSATU's Vavi has made a big deal about declining his nomination to be on the ANC's parliamentary election list. Out of the initial list of 12 COSATU officials, only four remain on the slate. This simply represents a division of labour in the Tripartite Alliance. The SACP, which currently accounts for some 20 per cent of the ANC's parliamentarians, is well-placed on the new slate. While retaining a few posts on the list, the COSATU hierarchy puts up a pretence of "independence" in order to obscure its role as a crucial prop of the popular-front capitalist government.

One of C.O.P.E.'s main spokesmen, Willie Madisha, has announced plans to split workers from COSATU and form a new union federation supposedly "independent" of political parties. In 2008 Madisha was ousted from the COSATU presidency and the SACP Central Committee. His call for an "independent labour movement" is laughable coming from a prominent C.O.P.E. leader. He is not fundamentally different from the pro-capitalist bureaucrats who sit atop COSATU, NACTU and the other union federations, most of which are defined by their direct ties to different bourgeois political parties. For example, NACTU was developed mainly by the Pan-Africanist Congress and adherents of the Black Consciousness Movement as a more nationalist alternative to COSATU.

We oppose the concept of political unions, which divide workers at the point of production along party lines, leading to scabbing on each others' strikes. Thus we oppose COSATU's purging of officials belonging to organisations that oppose the ANC, as has been happening in the SADTU teachers union (Madisha's former base). We stand for industrial unions, where all workers in a company or industry, irrespective of craft, political affiliation or race, belong to one union. This creates conditions for the maximum unity of the working class in its economic struggles against the bosses. We also oppose the syndicalist notion that unions can be "independent" of politics. There must be a fight for a new, class-struggle labour leadership that supports the building of a revolutionary workers party.

Nhlapo/Sowetan

Cops in neo-apartheid South Africa attack striking Woolworths workers in Johannesburg city center, 9 October 2008.

Left Tails of Bourgeois Nationalism

As Marxists, we proceed from the standpoint that the proletariat and its organisations must be independent of the parties and state agencies of the capitalist class. We are opposed to the executive offices of the capitalist state, from president to provincial premier to mayor. The ICL opposes Marxists running for those offices on principle (see "Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009). Standing for executive positions carries the implication that one is ready to accept responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state. However, communist deputies can, *as oppositionists to the bourgeois government*, serve in parliaments and other legislative bodies as revolutionary tribunes of the working class. This stands in sharp contrast to the SACP, which runs for parliament under the name of the ANC in order to administer the South African capitalist state. A slightly different version of this reformist programme is offered by some SACP dissidents who want the SACP to run for office in its own name as part of the Alliance, with the same aim of getting their hands on the bourgeois state apparatus.

Several leftist groups that had announced their intention to contest the April elections were excluded because they could not raise the exorbitant deposit set by Parliament, amounting to more than R500,000 (over $50,000), for parties contesting national and provincial elections. Despite fundamental programmatic differences, we agree with the Workers International Vanguard League (WIVL) and others in opposing such anti-democratic measures, which virtually guarantee the exclusion of small working-class parties.

Prior to its exclusion from the ballot, WIVL published an election manifesto that claimed to combat illusions in Parliament and characterised the government as a popular front, calling for a break with the Tripartite Alliance. But WIVL's reformist programme *reinforces* the political chains binding workers to the bourgeoisie. Incredibly, the manifesto avoids any mention of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; it does not denounce homophobia or the tribalist, patriarchal practices of *lobola* (bride price) and polygamy, or even raise the elementary call for free abortion on demand. Nor does the manifesto call to stop the deportation of immigrants, instead regurgitating the kind of insipid calls to fight discrimination that are the stock in trade of the nationalist popular front.

In 1998, WIVL supporter Abraham Agulhas led the breakaway union OCGAWU as it sued the Chemical Workers Industrial Union in the courts of the capitalist class enemy. Inviting the courts to intervene in the unions' internal affairs serves only to shackle labour's power and to place the unions further under the thumb of the capitalist state. Labour must clean its own house! (For a substantial account of our differences with WIVL, including its opposition to our call for a black-centred workers government, see our July 1998 pamphlet, "A Reply to the Workers International Vanguard League," *Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacists* No. 1.)

In supporting the 2006 national security guards strike, WIVL helped reinforce widespread illusions among workers that cops and security guards in the "new" South Africa are "comrades," unlike those under racist apartheid. This is a stark expression of the predominant false con-

Hate Trotskyism, Hate the Spartacists No. 1
A Reply to the Workers International Vanguard League
Publication of Spartacist South Africa
July 1998
$2 (36 pages)

Black History and the Class Struggle No. 12
South Africa Powder Keg
(Four-part series)
Publication of the Spartacist League/U.S.
February 1995
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sciousness of nationalism, which is the glue holding the Tripartite Alliance together and the biggest obstacle to winning advanced workers to a Marxist worldview. Black cops under apartheid were despised because they were correctly seen as serving the interests of the oppressor. But now, the line of the ANC and its reformist supporters is that the state, with its majority-black "democratic" government, serves the masses. The truth is that just as under apartheid, cops and security guards, who are auxiliaries to the police, today act as guard dogs of capitalist property and profits, breaking strikes and firing rubber bullets at township and student protests.

The SSA is unique on the left in demanding: Cops, security guards out of the unions! In the current elections, the SACP's "Vote ANC!" manifesto calls to "build street, village and block committees to fight crime" and to "strengthen and support community policing forums" (CPF), which has been SACP policy for some time. We oppose such structures, which act as auxiliaries to the murderous cops and encourage vigilantism. CPF members reportedly were ringleaders of the January anti-immigrant pogrom in Durban. According to the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), twice in the last nine months, activists in Sebokeng have been killed by CPF members or cops. One victim was an APF member.

The labour movement must defend those who come under attack for engaging in protest actions, such as the "Kliptown Five" activists, including a leader of WIVL, who were recently sentenced on phony charges of "public violence" stemming from a September 2007 APF housing protest in Soweto (see box above). Despite the fact that APF protests have repeatedly been attacked by cops, the APF hailed a strike by Johannesburg municipal cops, the paid thugs of the bourgeoisie.

In 1995, while everyone else on the left was celebrating the dawn of the "new South Africa," we warned: "The ANC-led nationalist movement cannot achieve any semblance of 'liberation' for the non-white masses since it is committed to maintaining South African capitalism, which has always been based on the brutal exploitation of the black toilers" (see "South Africa Powder Keg," *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 12, February 1995). Unlike the reformist Keep Left!, part of the International Socialist Tendency of the late Tony Cliff, and Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM), part of Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers' International, we have always opposed giving electoral or any other form of political support to the ANC. In 1994 the ICL gave critical support to the Workers List Party, which, despite a reformist programme that did not even criticise the ANC, drew a crude class line with its independent campaign.

The DSM, which was buried inside the ANC for nearly two decades, left this bourgeois party only in 1996. The Cliffites voted for the ANC in 1994 and 1999. Now, following the split by Terror Lekota and other ANC leaders who went on to form C.O.P.E., Keep Left! leaders Alan Goatley and Claire Ceruti have all but explicitly called for a vote to the ANC in *Socialism from Below* (November 2008), painting a "class line between the Lekota ANC and the Zuma ANC" and declaring, "Boycotting is not an option with this choice."

Like the DSM and WIVL, Keep Left! acts as a pressure group on the Alliance through the APF and other single-issue groups which sow the illusion that this bourgeois government can be pressured to serve the interests of the poor. Combating such illusions is crucial to forging a workers party of the Bolshevik type, one that would act, in Lenin's words, as a tribune of the people by mobilising the enormous power of the South African proletariat on behalf of all the poor and oppressed. The SSA dedicates its efforts to this task as part of the ICL's struggle to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.■

Defend the Kliptown Five!

We print below a protest letter sent on March 23 to the High Court, Witwatersrand Local Division, South Africa, by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

We vehemently protest the 13 March sentencing of Thabo Modisane, Charlie Nyatumba, Sibongile Maphalele, Ricardo and Oscar in the Protea Magistrate's Court on bogus charges of "public violence." The five activists were victimized for their participation in a 3 September 2007 housing protest in Kliptown, Soweto, organized hy the Anti-Privatisation Forum. Thabo Modisane, national organizer of the Workers International Vanguard League, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment or a R3,000 fine while the other four received five-year suspended sentences, which Modisane also received.

The Kliptown protesters were arrested for the "crime" of demanding houses that had been promised by the government. The routine cop violence meted out against township protests and workers' strikes shows that the "justice" system in the "new," "democratic" South Africa, as under the racist apartheid police state, exists to uphold a brutally oppressive capitalist order. Modisane was singled out by the court for harsher sentencing specifically because he had suffered court repression previously for his involvement in social struggles for the poor, including during apartheid. We join with others in the working-class movement in demanding that the convictions of the Kliptown Five he overturned immediately. We further call for charges to be dropped against the many others who have been victimized for engaging in social protests demanding the must basic necessities of life.

Thembinkosi Dwayisa

Beukes/SAPA

Above: ANC's Jacob Zuma (left) with SACP general secretary Blade Nzimande and COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi. Tripartite Alliance presides over neo-apartheid capitalism in South Africa. Right: Cops fire rubber bullets at Soweto demonstrators protesting lack of services, 3 September 2007.

Big Lie...

(continued from page 3)

The Democratic Party represents this capitalist system of oppression and exploitation no less than the Republicans, though usually with more of a veneer of concern for the "little people." It's no accident that among the biggest pushers of Reagan's "war on drugs" were the Democrats. In the 1980s, Democratic Party demagogue Al Sharpton led anti-drug vigilante sprees through Harlem, while black capitalist politicians made common cause with the biggest racists in America, bringing police shock troops into black communities. Jesse Jackson Sr. pushed endless variations on how "dope," not the (lynch) "rope," was the biggest problem for black people—a disgusting apology for racist terror. This was the old "blame the victim" rhetoric, the same tactic employed by President Barack Obama to try to blame black people for their oppression, as when he declared in his 2006 book, *The Audacity of Hope*, that "minorities, individually and collectively, have responsibilities as well" for their own condition.

As opposed to the "crack baby" myth, one of the very real health problems afflicting ghetto children is lead poisoning. In "Lead Pipes vs. Crack Pipes" (28 January), the *Columbia Journalism Review* pointed out that the same day the *Times* wrote about the "crisis that failed to show up," the *Washington Post* reported that studies showed that hundreds of children in Washington, D.C., had unsafe amounts of lead in their blood due to corruption of the water supply. The "sad irony," the *Columbia Journalism Review* notes, is that "lead poisoning in young children actually produces some of the irreparable cognitive and developmental damage that was once believed to be caused by exposing infants to cocaine.... But while crack babies became a symbol of America's deteriorating inner city during the Reagan administration, President Reagan cut funding for lead screening and ordered the Centers for Disease Control to stop keeping lead poisoning statistics."

Most people have understood the dangers of lead poisoning for some time—to say nothing of the effects of poverty, poor education, joblessness and homelessness. But such *real* threats to children have been downplayed by the capitalist media and politicians because the perps were (and are) landlords, employers and big-city governments—that is, the capitalists and their institutions of racist class rule, for whom the lives of the poor and the black population are cheap.

We are glad that Regina McKnight, the woman convicted of homicide after she suffered the stillbirth of her child in the hospital, was finally released from prison in 2008, as the South Carolina Supreme Court finally recognized that there was no evidence cocaine had caused what was *never* a crime but a personal tragedy. McKnight's supporters had worked for nearly a decade to prove that the cocaine theory was wrong. Indeed, a doctor had already pointed this out in a letter published in the *Times* on 22 May 2001. But there's almost eight years gone from this innocent woman's life that she'll never get back—and how many others are still suffering under racist drug laws?

We oppose all laws against drugs, as well as against all the other "crimes without victims"—prostitution, pornography, gambling and so on. Of course drug addiction, like alcoholism, can be dangerous—but this is a personal and medical matter, not one for the police. Such laws have always been used for social control, not social benefit. Chinese immigrants were persecuted under anti-opium laws in the late 19th century, after they finished building the railroads; Latinos were targeted under 1930s Depression-era anti-marijuana laws; the black population has always been a primary target. The fight for black liberation and women's liberation from this racist society and its repressive social institutions requires smashing the capitalist economic system and its state apparatus through socialist revolution.■

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China...

(continued from page 12)

contradiction between the *formal* equality proclaimed by the 'democracy' of the capitalists and the thousands of *real* limitations and subterfuges which turn the proletarians into *wage-slaves*."

While the demand for pure "democracy" might play a certain role in mobilizing the forces of counterrevolution in China, their victory would not bring a stable bourgeois parliamentary-type regime. Rather China would he subjugated and perhaps torn apart by American, West European and Japanese imperialism, transformed into a giant sweatshop.

The People's Republic of China is a bureaucratically deformed expression of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. The class rule of the capitalists has been smashed and the economy collectivized, but the proletariat is deprived of direct political power. What is needed is a fight for proletarian democracy. The workers and rural toilers need their own class-based governing institutions, the soviets (the Russian term for councils), which would be open to all parties defending the workers state

Charter 08 Pushes "Free Market" Capitalism

Charter 08's call for capitalist restoration is unamhiguous:

> "We should establish and protect the right to private property and promote an economic system of free and fair markets.... We should establish a Committee on State-Owned Property, reporting to the national legislature, that will monitor the transfer of state-owned enterprises to private ownership in a fair, competitive, and orderly manner."

It's more than a little ironic that this demand for "free market" capitalism is being raised at the very moment when the destructive irrationality of the capitalist system—the anarchy of the market—is more evident than at any time in the past several decades. World capitalism is in the throes of a deepening financial/economic crisis centered in the imperialist countries of North America, West Europe and Japan. Desperate to stanch the bleeding, the governments of these countries are nationalizing banks, subsidizing key industries and engaging in other forms of state intervention in the economy. At the same time, many U.S. politicians, especially around the Democratic Obama administration, have been pushing an increasingly protectionist stance against China.

One might think the authors of Charter 08 had taken their neoliheral economic program of privatizing industry and commerce from editorials in the *Wall Street Journal* or London *Economist* of two or three years ago. Actually the roots of their ideas are probably closer to home. Despite Charter 08's hostility to the CCP regime, in a sense it has taken the CCP leaders' doctrine of "market socialism" to its logical conclusion. For decades, the Beijing Stalinists have extolled market mechanisms and competition as superior to centralized planning and management. They have wielded the whip of the market in an attempt to resolve the prohlem of stagnant productivity inherent to the bureaucratic commandism that prevailed under Mao. Their claim has heen that China can hecome a great power by integrating into the world capitalist market via foreign investment and the export of cheap manufactured goods to the U.S. and West Europe. But now that economic strategy has been derailed—spectacularly—by the global capitalist economic crisis

The dominant weight of the state-owned enterprises and hanks has prevented China from being dragged into the kind of deep economic crisis that is ravaging most capitalist countries. Nonetheless, major sectors of its economy have been hard hit. In Guangdong province, the center of China's export industry, shipments plummeted *over 50 percent* in the first two months of this year. Already over 20 million migrant workers have been laid off, mainly from factories owned by foreign and offshore Chinese capitalists that produce consumer goods for export.

Corbis

People's Liberation Army marching through Beijing, June 1949. Revolution smashed landlord/capitalist rule but was deformed from its inception by nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy.

This has precipitated an upsurge of defensive labor struggle that has seen angry workers, demanding back pay or severance pay, fighting pitched battles with the police. The CCP regime has responded with a mixture of repression, cash handouts to some of the newly unemployed and the reversal of some of its privatization measures. "So much for capitalism," headlined the *Economist* (5 March) in an article on China's latest economic moves, which noted ruefully that the "opening up" of China's economy appears to be going "into reverse."

Anti-Communist Social Democrats Laud Charter 08

It is to be expected that leading organs of Western bourgeois opinion would praise Charter 08. But so do a number of groups claiming to be socialist, indeed Trotskyist. In reality, these groups reject Trotskyism in favor of a program of "democratic" capitalist counterrevolution.

A recent article by the Hong Kong-based *October Review* group, linked to the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), supports Charter 08 without the slightest criticism ("The State of Human Rights in China," 31 December 2008). Saluting "the efforts of the people for democracy and human rights," the article has not a single reference to capitalism, socialism or the working class!

For its part, the British-based Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) led by Peter Taaffe writes:

> "This manifesto, now with over 7,000 signatures, calls for an end to one-party rule and for basic civil liberties—things that socialists also fight for (many 'charter 08' signatories, however, are liberals who favour a faster pace of capitalist 'economic reform')."
>
> —chinaworker.info, 16 January

While chiding Charter 08 for its economic proposals, the CWI *positively identifies* with its calls for "democracy." This is nothing new for the Taaffeites, who have backed all manner of anti-Communist forces in the degenerated/deformed workers states. In the final tumultuous years of the USSR, they supported the capitalist-restorationist "democratic" camp of Boris Yeltsin. In August 1991, Yeltsin, openly backed hy then U.S. president George Bush Sr., staged a successful countercoup against the remnants of the disintegrating Kremlin oligarchy. The Taaffeites joined Yeltsin's reactionary rabble on the Moscow barricades. In sharp contrast, our comrades in Moscow distributed a leaflet in the tens of thousands with the urgent call: "Soviet Workers: Defeat Yeltsin-Bush Counterrevolution!" Capitalist counterrevolution brought mass unemployment, falling life expectancy and social degradation to the peoples of the former USSR and East Europe, while emboldening the imperialist exploiters in attacking working people and minorities.

Today, the CWI publicizes the work of the Hong Kong-based *China Labour Bulletin* (CLB). While masquerading as a workers organization championing "independent trade unions," the CLB is a counterrevolutionary group with direct connections to U.S. imperialism. Its leader Han Dongfang has long had a program on the CIA's Radio Free Asia and is vice-chair of the World Movement for Democracy, an outfit founded and run by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a notorious CIA front. Han has been called the "Chinese Lech Walesa," after the leader of Poland's Solidarność. In the 1980s, Solidarność, the only "union" supported by Reagan, Thatcher and the Vatican, led the drive to bring capitalist exploitation in "democratic" guise back to the Soviet bloc, with full support from the Taaffeites and the USec.

Like Charter 08's demand for "free elections," calls for "free trade unions" on the Solidarność model are a reactionary trap for the working class. The struggle for unions free of bureaucratic control, important for China's embattled working people, must be based on defense of the workers state that issued from the 1949 Revolution. This struggle, as well as the fight for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold as part of the fight for soviet democracy, for the formation of workers councils opposing the bureaucratic parasites and suppressing counterrevolutionary elements.

Fukada/NY Times

Communist Party leader in Mianzhu begs enraged parents of victims of last year's Sichuan earthquake to stop their protest of shoddy school construction, May 2008.

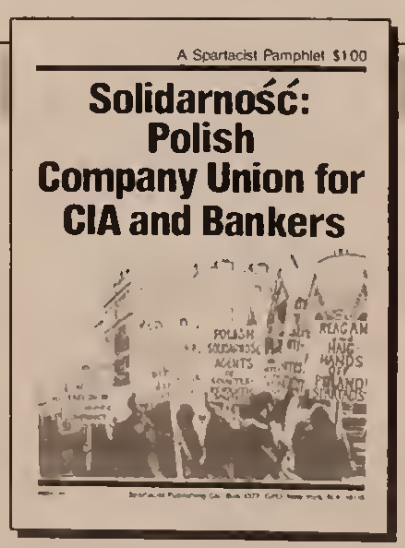
Witting Tools of U.S. Imperialism

Charter 08's leaders are not naive ingénues; many among them also have open associations with U.S. imperialism. Liu Xiaoho, one of the Charter's main organizers, is president of the U.S.-based "Independent Chinese PEN Center," which receives regular NED funding. Two other prominent Charter spokesmen, Li Baiguang and Teng Biao, were given the NED's "Democracy Award" at a ceremony in Washington last year. To date, the CCP regime appears to have treated these pro-imperialist dissidents with untypically mild repression. While taking steps to block the Charter from the Internet, it has arrested only one Charter spokesman, Liu Xiaobo, while briefly detaining others or putting them under surveillance. This is in contrast to the severe repression that has been inflicted on leaders of workers strikes and other protests.

While sharply opposing Charter 08's politics, we do not at this time support the repression of its initiators and signers. These right-wing ideologues are clearly not leading a movement that threatens the existence of the Chinese workers state, as was the case with Polish Solidarność by the fall of 1981. At that time, we wrote: "The threat of a counterrevolutionary thrust for power is now posed in Poland. That threat must be crushed at all costs and by any means necessary" ("Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!" *WV* No. 289, 25 September 1981). When the Stalinists moved to suppress Solidarność in December 1981, we supported this. At the same time, we indicted the bureaucracy for its nationalism, economic mismanagement and decades of capitulation to the Catholic church and other pro-capitalist forces, which drove workers from the historically socialist-minded

CORRECTION

The article "*Milk*: A Review" (*WV* No 932, 13 March) stated that Dan White, who killed Harvey Milk and San Francisco mayor George Moscone, was "sentenced to less than seven years in prison." White was in fact sentenced to seven years and eight months.



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proletariat of Poland into the arms of reaction.

With their hosannas to the "free markets" that are wreaking havoc around the globe, the right-wing intellectuals of Charter 08 are highly unlikely to gain any traction among China's working people, for whom the "magic of the market" has meant savage exploitation and growing unemployment. Three decades ago, even as it promoted bourgeois "democracy," Charter 77 did not call for the restoration of a capitalist economy because at the time such a demand would have repelled most Czechoslovak intellectuals, not to speak of the workers.

The program of "democratic" counterrevolution pushed by the likes of Charter 08 must be defeated *politically*—and that is something that the nationalist CCP bureaucracy is manifestly incapable of doing. In meting out repression, the Stalinist rulers do not differentiate between counterrevolutionaries and those who politically oppose bureaucratic rule from the standpoint of the historic interests of the proletariat. After the smashing of capitalist class rule in 1949, hundreds of Chinese Trotskyists who fought in defense of the Revolution were rounded up and thrown in prison or shot. Following the worker and student upheavals centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, the regime executed workers. We oppose the institution of capital punishment on principle, in China—where thousands are executed each year—no less than in capitalist countries.

The U.S. group known as the Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSL) makes correct criticisms of Charter 08 in its February 10 Internet posting, "The Truth Behind China's Charter 08 Manifesto—Liberal Language Cloaks Counterrevolutionary Aims." But the PSL looks to the Stalinist bureaucracy as the key barrier to counterrevolution: "The CCP government, in spite all of its contradictions, remains the most important obstacle to the return of China to its previous state of semi-colonial slavery." While criticizing the CCP leaders' "market reforms," the PSL hopes that Hu Jintao & Co. will see the light and return to the "socialist road":

> "Faced with an intensified imperialist offensive, the CCP leadership could change course, turning to the working class for support and reinstituting socialist measures.
>
> "However unlikely, the path to a renewal or strengthening of socialist methods is possible as long as the CCP retains its hold on state power."

The PSL contrasts the CCP's "market reforms" to "the path followed by the Communist Party during the Mao era." However, Mao-style national "self-sufficiency" (economic autarky) and the market-oriented policies of later CCP leaders were both ways by which the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy sought to "peacefully coexist" with world imperialism in different periods and different international contexts. Under Mao, this was expressed in China's grotesque alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union.

China Photos

AP

Global capitalist economic crisis has slowed Chinese growth, hit export industry hard. Left: Massive jobs fair in Shaanxi province, March 1. Above: Laid-off workers in Harbin stage workplace sit-in on March 18 demanding reinstatement of insurance and retirement benefits.

In reality, the continued rule of the CCP *undermines* defense of proletarian state power in China. Thanks to the regime's policies, a sizable class of capitalist entrepreneurs with links to the offshore bourgeoisie in Hong Kong and Taiwan has emerged on the mainland, though they are still prevented from organizing politically and vying for power. Many CCP officials have financial and familial ties to such entrepreneurs. Contrary to the PSL's claims, the bureaucracy continues to preserve state property not out of a subjective identification with socialism but, as Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), "only to the extent that it fears the proletariat"—i.e., to protect its privileged position as a parasitic caste atop the workers state. Sooner or later, by one political path or another, the Stalinist regime will bring China to the brink of capitalist counterrevolution, posing pointblank the fate of the most populous country on earth.

Corbis

Chinese workers join Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing, May 1989. Banner reads: "The Workers' and Students' Hearts Are Joined."

It is instructive to look back at the social and political dynamics of counterrevolution in the Russian core of the former USSR. This was *not* led by anti-Communist dissident intellectuals analogous to China's Charter 08 but by major elements derived from the decomposing *nomenklatura*, the Soviet bureaucratic elite. A few years before Boris Yeltsin took power and announced the dissolution of the USSR, he was a senior leader in the Kremlin. There are today more than a few potential Yeltsins in the leading bodies of the CCP. At the same time, the Chinese Stalinists have learned something from the counterrevolution in the ex-USSR. Seeking to forestall such developments in China, the CCP leaders have pursued policies of *perestroika* (market-oriented "reforms") without a hint of *glasnost* (political democratization).

For Proletarian Political Revolution!

In *The Revolution Betrayed*, his classic analysis of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky emphasized: "Under a nationalized economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery." The CCP regime's policies and practices create a climate in which some of the proponents of "democratic" counterrevolution could gain a hearing, at least among a layer of intellectuals, peasants and even some workers. At the same time, the increasing antagonism between the bureaucracy and China's toiling masses is also preparing the ground for a proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic ruling Stalinists.

The potential for a pro-socialist workers uprising was shown in the May-June 1989 Tiananmen upheaval. In its article on Charter 08, the PSL endorses the line of the Chinese Stalinists on these events, calling them "a counterrevolutionary effort painted in the West as a 'struggle for democracy'." In reality, protests that began among students opposing corruption and seeking political liberalization were joined by masses of Chinese workers, driven into action by their own grievances against the impact of the regime's market measures, especially high inflation.

Workers assemblies and motorized flying squads were thrown up, pointing to the potential for the emergence of authentic worker, soldier and peasant councils. The entry into struggle of the working class terrified the CCP rulers, who eventually unleashed fierce repression. But the bureaucracy, including the officer corps of the military, began to fracture under the impact of the proletarian upsurge. The first army units that were mobilized refused to act in the face of enormous popular support for the protests among Beijing's working people. Other more regime-loyal army units had to be brought in to carry out the massacre of June 1989, which was overwhelmingly targeted at workers rather than students. This was an incipient proletarian political revolution, drowned in blood by the Stalinist bureaucracy (see "The Spectre of Tiananmen and Working-Class Struggle in China Today," *WV* Nos. 836 and 837, 12 and 26 November 2004).

The crucial missing element, during the Tiananmen events as well as today, is an authentic Bolshevik—i.e., Leninist-Trotskyist—party to rally the working masses around the banner of workers democracy and communist internationalism. Such a party would be forged in political combat not only with currents emerging out of the decomposing Stalinist bureaucracy but also with the anti-Communist purveyors of Western-type "democracy," including some who will doubtless posture far to the left of the Charter 08 group.

The survival and advancement of China's revolutionary gains hinges on the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of Japan, North America and West Europe, the only road toward the all-round modernization of China as part of an international planned economy. A proletarian political revolution producing a China of worker and peasant councils would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world, dealing a deathblow to the bourgeoisie's "death of communism" propaganda, lifting up the downtrodden masses of the former Soviet Union and East Europe and inspiring the workers in the imperialist heartlands. This, ultimately, is the only perspective that can defeat the siren call of "democracy" pushed by imperialist-backed outfits as well as fake "socialists" who are enemies of the gains of the Chinese Revolution ■

Civil Rights...

(continued from page 2)

aptly depicts this by having King say to someone being beaten by the cops in Watts: "If there is any blood spilled in the streets, let it be *our* blood!" In his speech "Why I Am Opposed to the War in Vietnam" [1967], given after he received the Nobel Peace Prize, King condemns only the war in Vietnam! He does not oppose war in general, but calls for a "revolution of values" that would allow for the end of wars. His position on war is no different from thousands of preachers. He says that the Vietnam war interfered with the anti-poverty program of LBJ, and, by the way, war is terrible. The problem with genuine pacifism is that it is dumb and calls for individual action ("moral witness"). King chose to use the non-violent ideas that he got in discussions with the right-wing social-democrat Bayard Rustin to try to keep the black masses corralled.

Lastly, the article takes a swipe at the founding of black colleges in the South, saying that they "...were founded by church institutions to primarily train clergy and teachers, the core of the black petty bourgeoisie." While these colleges are today certainly cradles of the "talented tenth," they were founded in a collaboration between missionaries and the Freedmen's Bureau for the purpose of teaching former slaves to read. It had been illegal to educate slaves in most of the South under slavery. As a result, there was a tremendous thirst for knowledge (mainly of the bible) by former slaves at the end of the Civil War. According to Eric Foner in *Reconstruction*:

> "In the broadest sense, the schools established by the Freedmen's Bureau and the Northern aid societies, to quote the American Freedmen's Union Commission, aimed 'to plant a genuine republicanism in the southern States'." (p. 147)

At the time, that was a part of trying to complete the Civil War.

Joe Vetter

***WV* replies:**

We thank Joe for his letter. Readers are also referred to the Spartacist pamphlet *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 2 (1985), titled "On the Civil Rights Movement," which includes the articles "Bourgeoisie Celebrates King's Liberal Pacifism" (reprinted from *WV* No. 207, 26 May 1978) and "SNCC: 'Black Power' and the Democrats" (reprinted from *WV* No. 327, 8 April 1983). ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

China

Charter 08: Program for "Democratic" Counterrevolution

In December, a document titled Charter 08 appeared on the Internet in China. Signed by some 300 individuals, largely intellectuals and academics, it has since garnered another 8,000 signatories. An English translation was quickly circulated abroad and then published in the *New York Review of Books* (15 January). The capitalist media in the U.S. and elsewhere has heaped praise on Charter 08. An editorial in the London *Financial Times* (7 January) saluted it as "a powerfully written affirmation of universal human rights." A *Washington Post* editorial (30 January) called it China's "new democracy movement."

Charter 08 is an explicit program for capitalist counterrevolution in the Chinese deformed workers state, wrapped in the envelope of "democracy." Its initiators seek to emulate the imperialist-backed "human rights" dissidents in East Europe who spearheaded the counterrevolutions in the former Soviet bloc in 1989-92. The Charter calls for "free elections" as a political mechanism for capitalist-restorationist parties to attain governmental power. It demands the privatization of the collectivized core of the Chinese economy—the state-owned enterprises—as well as the land. In short, this is a program to reverse the social gains of the 1949 Revolution that, if realized, would plunge China back into imperialist subjugation and exploitation.

Charter 08 retrospectively supports the imperialist-backed Guomindang (Nationalist Party) of Chiang Kai-shek against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the civil war of the late 1940s: "Victory over Japan in 1945 offered one more chance for China to move toward modern government, but the Communist defeat of the Nationalists in the civil war thrust the nation into the abyss of totalitarianism."

The 1949 Chinese Revolution was a progressive social revolution of world-historic significance. Hundreds of millions of peasants rose up and seized the land on which their forebears had been exploited from time immemorial. The creation of a centrally planned, collectivized economy laid the basis for enormous social progress. The revolution enabled women to advance by magnitudes over their previous miserable status rooted in the old Confucian order in such practices as forced marriage and concubinage. A nation that had been ravaged and divided by foreign powers was unified and freed from imperialist subjugation.

However, the Revolution was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong's CCP regime, a nationalist bureaucratic caste resting atop the workers state. Unlike the Russian October Revolution of 1917, which was carried out by a class-conscious proletariat guided by the Bolshevik internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky, the Chinese Revolution was the result of peasant guerrilla war led by Mao's Stalinist-nationalist forces. Patterned after the Stalinist bureaucracy that had usurped power in the USSR, Mao and his successors, including today's Hu Jintao regime, have preached the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism—a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance—could be built in a single country. In practice, "socialism in one country" has meant accommodation to world imperialism and opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution that is essential for the advance to socialism.

Getty

George Bush in May 2006 hosts Chinese anti-Communist "human rights" dissidents Li Baiguang, Wang Yi, Yu Jie (left to right), later signatories to Charter 08.

As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and counterrevolution. In answer to the aspirations of the Chinese workers and rural toilers for democratic rights and a government that represents their needs and interests, we stand for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a government based on elected workers and peasants councils and committed to revolutionary proletarian internationalism. This perspective, premised on defense of the gains of the Revolution, is diametrically opposed to the counterrevolutionary machinations of outfits like Charter 08.

Siemens Metals & Mining

Workers at Baosteel plant in Shanghai, part of China's collectivized industry.

"Human Rights" and "Democracy" in the Service of Counterrevolution

Charter 08 takes its name from Charter 77, a document put out by dissidents in Czechoslovakia in 1977. This and similar groups were encouraged and promoted by the "human rights" campaign launched by then U.S. Democratic president Jimmy Carter as a way of politically undermining the Soviet Union and its East European bloc partners. It is, as they say, no accident that Vaclav Havel, a leading figure in Charter 77, later played a central role in the imperialist-backed counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia in 1989-90.

Far more openly than Havel & Co. in 1977, the group around Charter 08 brandishes the watchwords of "human rights" and "democracy" to attack the revolutionary overthrow of capitalist rule. The Charter states: "Where is China headed in the twenty-first century? Will it continue with 'modernization' under authoritarian rule, or will it embrace universal human values, join the mainstream of civilized nations, and build a democratic system?" Concretely, it demands: "We must abolish the special privilege of one party to monopolize power and must guarantee principles of free and fair competition among political parties."

There is no such thing as a classless "democracy." Western-type parliamentary government elected through universal suffrage is a disguised political form of the *dictatorship of the capitalist class*. In such a system the working class is politically reduced to atomized individuals. The bourgeoisie can effectively manipulate the electorate through its control of the media, the education system and the other institutions shaping public opinion. In all capitalist "democracies," government officials are bought and paid for by the banks and large corporations. As Lenin explained in his 1918 polemic *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*: "Even in the most democratic bourgeois state the oppressed people at every step encounter the crying

continued on page 10

Defend the Chinese Bureaucratically Deformed Workers State!
For Workers Political Revolution!

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 934 | C-701 | 10 April 2009

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Down With NATO!

EPA

AFP

Left: German chancellor Angela Merkel and U.S. president Barack Obama review troops in Baden-Baden, Germany, on April 3, immediately before NATO summit. Right: U.S. occupation troops, along with Afghan soldiers, in Afghanistan.

U.S./NATO Troops Out of Afghanistan Now!

Statement of the International Communist League

The following statement was issued on March 27 by the International Executive Committee of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The statement was distributed by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France and the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany, sections of the ICL, at anti-NATO protests in Strasbourg, France. It was also distributed by the Spartacist League/Britain at the London G-20 protests on April 1 and 2. To protect NATO's bloody imperialist rulers from justified outrage, the city center of Strasbourg was placed in a state of armed siege days before the summit, while in the suburbs thousands of anti-NATO demonstrators from across Europe were met with brutal cop terror. On April 4, an estimated 50 people were injured by France's notorious CRS riot cops. The French cops had taken their cue from the London cops, who had brutally suppressed the earlier G-20 protests. The police rampage in London led to the death of Ian Tomlinson, a 47-year-old man. Three witnesses told the London *Guardian* (7 April) that Tomlinson was struck with a police baton and thrown to the ground by a cop, his head hitting against the pavement. Over 300 people were arrested during the anti-NATO protests. At least six demonstrators have already been sentenced to three to six months in jail by a Strasbourg court. Such state repression targets the entire workers movement. ***Free all the protesters! Drop all charges! For working-class protests against state repression!***

* * *

At their April meeting in Strasbourg, France, new U.S. president Barack Obama and the leaders of Germany, France and other NATO member states will celebrate the 60th anniversary of this imperialist alliance. The meeting will be held against the backdrop of the ongoing, brutal neocolonial occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, the recent slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza, and a growing world economic crisis that threatens the livelihoods of hundreds of millions. Almost 18 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, the incessant bourgeois mantras about the superiority of capitalism notwithstanding, this deeply irrational system is itself proving once again that Karl Marx was right.

Reuters

Anti-NATO protesters brutalized by cops in Strasbourg, France, April 2.

The *only* way out of the blind alley into which capitalism has led humanity is international proletarian revolution to rip the productive forces from the hands of an exploiting minority and organize society on a rational basis. International workers rule is needed to clean up the mess that decaying capitalist imperialism has made and to lay the basis for a classless, communist society in which economic scarcity, exploitation, oppression and war are relics of a benighted past. The starting point is the Marxist understanding that the working class cannot wield the capitalist state for its own interests; rather that state must be smashed and replaced by a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Tens of thousands are expected to demonstrate against the NATO anniversary summit, and the bourgeois state is preparing to meet them with the jackboot of police repression. But the aim of the protest organizers—who reject the aims of communism and the proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist strategy needed to realize them—is to lobby the imperialists for a little "change" to better sell their system of exploitation to workers and the oppressed. The social democrats, liberal "anti-globalization" types and bourgeois-pacifists peddle hoary phrases about a "policy of peace" and "international cooperation" in order to deceive the masses and advance the interests of their *own* bourgeoisies. The anarchists mobilizing for the demos—with the call, for example, "Smash, we can!"—have nothing to offer but the illusion of "forcing" disarmament under capitalism.

The drive toward war is as inextricably

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NATO...

(continued from page 1)

rooted in the capitalist system as the drive to increase profit. Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, marked by the domination of the globe by a small exclusive club of capitalist great powers that lord it over the weaker, dependent nations. Twice in the past century, interimperialist competition for resources, markets and spheres of exploitation erupted in cataclysmic world wars. In 1915, in the midst of the first interimperialist war, the outstanding Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin attacked those who spread illusions in capitalism by preaching "peace in general":

> "Nothing throws more dust in the eyes of the workers, nothing imbues them with a more deceptive idea about the *absence of deep* contradictions between capitalism and socialism, nothing *embellishes* capitalist slavery more than this deception does. No, we must make use of the desire for peace so as to explain to the masses that the benefits they expect from peace cannot be obtained without a series of revolutions."
>
> —"The Question of Peace" (1915)

Guided by this revolutionary program, Lenin and the Bolsheviks led the 1917 October Revolution, which overthrew capitalism and ripped Russia out of the First World War.

The NATO war alliance was forged after World War II—and the Soviet Red Army's victory over Hitler's Third Reich—as part of the imperialists' drive to "roll back Communism." From the Korean War in the 1950s to the military coup in the NATO outpost Turkey in 1980, the U.S.-led anti-Soviet crusade was sealed with the blood of millions of workers, leftists and oppressed nationalities. The imperialist world order of today is shaped by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. This was a historic defeat for the working masses internationally, especially for the populations of the former Soviet Union, East Europe and the ex-DDR [East Germany] who have faced mass poverty. Capitalist restoration was accompanied by and further fueled communalist slaughter and fratricidal bloodletting, as seen most recently in the war between Russia and the U.S. client state of Georgia. The collapse of the USSR fueled the imperialists' appetites to stomp all over the world with impunity. The catastrophic results of counterrevolution underline the vital importance today of the unconditional military defense of China, the most powerful of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states, and the other countries where capitalist rule has been overthrown: Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam. We call for proletarian political revolution to replace the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies with regimes based on workers democracy and Bolshevik internationalism.

Der Spiegel

Lance missile in West Germany was part of NATO arsenal aimed at Soviet Union.

Barack Obama: Commander-in-Chief of Racist U.S. Imperialism

Today, it's necessary to reassert the elementary understanding that the president of the American capitalist state is the *class enemy* of the world's workers and oppressed, especially of the U.S. proletariat, immigrants and the specially oppressed black population. While the decision to close Guantánamo (within a year) and review the release of some detainees was much-hyped, Obama has endorsed indefinite detention, reminiscent of police-state dictatorships, and he is more generally dedicated to continuing Bush's "war on terror." In this, he is in full agreement with the European rulers, who merely wished to give a little "humanitarian" window-dressing for this crusade, which has been used by every imperialist government to strengthen state repression against oppressed minorities and the working class and to ideologically justify imperialist depredations. The U.S., UN and EU [European Union] have applied sanctions against Iran and continue to threaten it over its nuclear program. It could not be clearer that Iran *needs* nuclear weapons to deter an imperialist attack.

As U.S. imperialism seeks an "exit strategy" from the quagmire in devastated Iraq, the focus under Obama has shifted to Afghanistan, where a NATO occupation force of 68,000 troops, including a non-U.S contingent of 32,000, continues in its eighth year of ravaging the country. Obama campaigned and took office pledging to draw down U.S. troop levels in Iraq in order to pursue what a significant section of the U.S. bourgeoisie sees as more strategic aims. Now he is doing just that, sending an additional 17,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan and escalating murderous U.S. bombing attacks on villages in neighboring Pakistan. For years, the U.S. propped up one dictatorial regime after another in Islamabad, simultaneously fostering the growth of Islamic fundamentalist forces favored by the Pakistani military. Now this unstable, nuclear-armed country could well start coming apart at the seams under the impact of Obama's extension of the Afghan war and U.S. pressure on the Pakistani military to clear the Taliban and its allies out of the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan.

The military escalation takes place as the economic base of U.S. imperialism is undergoing a meltdown that has taken on international proportions. The contradiction between U.S. imperialism's overwhelming military might and its weakened economic position is the cause of the heightened irrationality and aggressiveness of the U.S. rulers. They see the Obama presidency as their best bet in this situation for asserting their dominant position. Doing its bit, the reformist left in the U.S. embraced a perspective of "Anybody but Bush." They were over the moon about Obama's victory, as exemplified by the Workers World Party, which gushed in the 20 November 2008 issue of its paper: "As communists and revolutionaries we take joy with the oppressed and other progressives as they gather in jubilation from Harlem to Colombia to Japan to Kenya with the election of Obama."

In sharp counterposition to such grotesque enthusing over the new Commander-in-Chief of blood-drenched U.S. imperialism, the Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League, opposed on principle any support to Obama and all other bourgeois politicians, fighting to break workers, youth and oppressed from illusions in the capitalist Democratic Party and to forge the revolutionary multiracial workers party needed to sweep away U.S. imperialism. Our U.S. section told the ***truth*** about what the Obama presidency will mean, writing directly after the elections:

> "From the standpoint of the international working class and oppressed there is

continued on page 7

Trotskyists Denounced Formation of NATO

TROTSKY

LENIN

Sixty years ago, our political forebears in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) denounced the formation of NATO as military muscle for U.S. imperialism, which emerged from World War II as the new top cop of the capitalist world order. NATO's role as the anti-Soviet juggernaut in Europe was baldly proclaimed by its first General Secretary, Lord Ismay, who said that the alliance's purpose was to "keep the Russians out, the Americans in and the Germans down."

As Trotskyists, we have always opposed NATO as part of our fight for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, for workers political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy, and for the triumph of the working class over their capitalist exploiters and the establishment of a Socialist United States of Europe. The SWP's prediction that NATO's birth signaled the demise of the United Nations was mistaken. The UN served then, and continues to serve today, as a "democratic" shell for the imperialist powers, centrally the U.S., dispatching blue-helmeted "peacekeepers" around the globe.

As we go to press the signatures of twelve European nations are being affixed to the North Atlantic Pact. The immense significance of this event transcends by far its effect on the "cold war" for which it is immediately designed. Four years after the collapse of Hitler's "New Order" a new balance of power is being forged on the old continent. At the head of the coalition, for the first time in modern history, stands a non-European power—American imperialism, chief victor in the recent war, inheritor of the mantle of the British Empire, unrivalled pretender for the role of master of the world....

While the pact will hasten the demise of the United Nations, it is important to note, as the architects of the alliance continually assure us, that the pact is legally sanctioned by the UN charter itself. Once again the class character and class aims of a bourgeois institution has dynamited the illusions and demagogy of liberals, social democrats and Stalinists. Just as Hitler was able to use the statutes of the Weimar Constitution, "the most democratic in the world" to create his Nazi dictatorship, so American imperialism is establishing its juggernaut of war in the very bosom of "the organization of world peace." The UN, like its predecessor, the League of Nations, as we predicted long ago, has been the breeding ground for war.

The general staffs have carefully calculated all contingencies and eventualities—all but one. That one is the alliance of the peoples of the world who above all want peace. Not the maneuverings of the Kremlin, but the class struggle in Shanghai and Indonesia, in Milan, the Ruhr and Detroit will prove the Achilles heel of this unholy compact of death, reaction and dictatorship.

—"North Atlantic Alliance," *Fourth International* (April 1949)

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The closing date for news in this issue is April 7.

No. 934 **10 April 2009**

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Thursday, April 16, 6:30 p.m.

1917 Bolshevik Revolution: How the Workers Took Power

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room: Rosa Parks E

Thursday, April 30, 6:30 p.m.

The Trotskyists' Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room: Rosa Parks F

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, April 22, 6 p.m.

Workers Struggle During the Great Depression

Lessons of the 1934 Trotskyist-Led Teamsters Strike

UCLA, Bunche Hall, Rm. 1221A

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Wednesday, April 29, 7:45 p.m.

Marxism and Science:

A Tribute to Darwin and the 150th Anniversary of *On the Origin of Species*

Hunter College, West Building, Rm. 407

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

Reinstatement of Death Sentence Still Looms—Free Mumia Now!

Racist Supreme Court Denies Mumia's Appeal

The following statement was issued on April 7 by the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

Mumia Abu-Jomol's life is in imminent danger! In a naked display of racist contempt, the U.S. Supreme Court on April 6 summarily turned down without comment Mumia's petition to overturn the frame-up conviction that led to a death sentence for this innocent man. While it took less than one business day for the Court to reject Mumia's petition, which was based on the exclusion of eleven of 15 prospective black jurors from his 1982 trial, the racists in black robes have for weeks been considering the Philadelphia district attorney's appeal to reinstate the death sentence, which was overturned by U.S. District Court Judge William Yohn in 2001. Make no mistake! ***The neo-segregationist high court of Americon capitolism could well be preparing the noose for Abu-Jamal's legal lynching.*** What is necessary is the mobilization of the multiracial working class independent of and in opposition to the capitalist state and its political representatives, whether Democrat, Republican or Green. ***Free Mumia! Abolish the racist death penolty!***

A former Black Panther Party spokesman, supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization and award-winning journalist, Mumia was framed up on charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on 9 Decemher 1981. For 27 years, the cops, prosecutors, bourgeois politicians and their media jackals have howled for Mumia's blood because they see in Mumia a voice of defiant opposition to all forms of racist discrimination. Mountains of evidence, not least the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner, have proven Mumia's innocence. But court after court has refused to even consider the evidence. As Mumia put it in an April 6 interview, the Court's decision shows that "law is politics by other means and that the Constitution means *n*othing, that a fair jury means nothing." Mumia's case demonstrates that ***there is no justice in the copitalist courts.*** The courts, prisons and police exist to maintain, through organized violence and terror, the rule of the capitalists over working people.

Jennifer Beach

Since taking up Mumia's case in 1987, we have advocated pursuing all possible legal proceedings, while fighting against any illusions in the courts of the capitalist class enemy. Our program of class-struggle defense is diametrically opposed to that of the liberals and reformists, who promote dangerous illusions that the courts can provide justice for Mumia. These illusions have been codified in the subordination of the demand for Mumia's freedom to the call for a "new trial." This has been promoted for many years by the Workers World Party, International Socialist Organization, Socialist Action (SA), International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal led by Pam Africa and the San Francisco Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal led by SA honcho Jeff Mackler.

We fight for Mumia's freedom as part of the struggle for black liberation based on the program of revolutionary integrationism. We fight against every manifestation of racist oppression, a struggle that can be victorious only through the full social, political and economic integration of black people into an egalitarian *socialist* society. ***For block liberation through socialist revolution! Mumia Abu-Jamol is innocent! Free Mumia now! Abolish the racist deoth penolty!*** ■

Young Spartacus

Revolutionary Marxism vs. Democratic Party Pressure Politics

For Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All!

We reprint below a leaflet by the New York Spartacus Youth Club issued on April 3.

Democratic New York State governor David Paterson wants to make working people and the oppressed pay for the capitalist economic crisis through draconian cuts to social services, including with budget cuts and tuition hikes at SUNY and CUNY schools. This has sparked protests on campuses and citywide, including a March 5 rally at City Hall that drew tens of thousands of city workers and other unionists, joined by a contingent of hundreds of students from Hunter and BMCC. However, misleaders from local trade unions, including the UFT [teachers union], 1199SEIU, DC 37 and the CUNY Professional Staff Congress (PSC), built the March 5 rally as a groveling appeal to the very same Democratic Party politicians who are responsible for carrying out the austerity measures.

After helping Obama's Wall Street cronies bankroll his election victory, the trade-union sellouts (and their left tails) have turned to pushing "fair share tax reform," "tax the rich" shell games and appeals to the Obama and Paterson administrations to "bail out the people, not the banks." Lobbying for "fairer" taxes is one of the standard ways the labor bureaucrats divert union members from the militant class struggle necessary to defend their livelihoods. By pushing the lie that the capitalist system can serve the interests of working people and the oppressed, these labor misleaders chain the multiracial working class to the bankrupt system of capitalism, which is based on the exploitation of labor, racial oppression and imperialist war. In rallies at CUNY campuses, fake socialists including the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Internationalist Group (IG) have been pushing a narrow, campus-parochial version of the same class-collaborationist politics, based on appeals to local Democrats and university administrators to stop the budget cuts.

Young Spartacus

SYC at 16 December 2008 budget cuts protest outside Democratic governor Paterson's offices in NYC.

Down With Budget Cuts and Tuition Hikes!

At a March 5 Hunter College rally built by the IG and ISO, a Spartacus Youth Club member explained, "None of these attacks are simply a by-product of mismanagement or 'greedy individuals' or some legacy of a right-wing president. Economic crises are endemic to capitalism and both the Republicans and the Democrats are political parties of the capitalist rulers." The Spartacus Youth Club opposes the budget cuts and the capitalist class' austerity measures against the working class and oppressed. We fight for free, quality, integrated education for all, and for open admissions with no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for students. While student protest can be a catalyst for broader social struggle, students lack social power and must ally with the working class. Only the working class has the social power and historic interest to liberate all the oppressed by the revolutionary overthrow of the system of capitalist exploitation.

The capitalist class monopolizes the vast wealth of society for its own ends. There can never be equality between oppressed and oppressor: race and class bias are inherent to education under capitalism. The capitalists and their agents run the education system to serve bourgeois interests, including propagating bourgeois ideology and training the next generation of Dr. Strangeloves. In the U.S. the oppression of the black population as a race-color caste, overwhelmingly segregated at the bottom of society, is key for the capitalist class maintaining its rule. This has meant systematic attacks on education for black youth, from the defeat of Boston busing to the rollback of affirmative action to the racist purge of universities through tuition and fee hikes. It will take a socialist revolution to win the quality of education offered to the sons and daughters of the ruling class for blacks, minorities and the working class.

The campus administrations are the agents of the capitalist class on campus, breaking unions, cracking down on student protest and implementing austerity measures. In a leaflet distributed at City Hall on March 5, the centrist fake Trotskyists of the IG blamed the reformist ISO for circulating a petition "calling for Hunter College president Raab to 'come out against tuition hikes and support student activities in opposition to the tuition hikes'." They go on to make the correct point: "To call on her to support student protests against that can only promote illusions." These are fine words on paper, but the IG never raised any criticisms of the ISO in their voluminous speeches at the March 5 and 25 campus protests we attended that were built by both organizations.

The IG criticizing the ISO for "promoting illusions" is a joke. Well-known IG supporter Sándor John serves as the Hunter College representative of CUNY

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MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

Currier & Ives

PRELUDE TO AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Lithograph of 1847 Battle of Buena Vista.

We print below, in edited form, the conclusion of a presentation by Jacob Zorn of the Spartacist League at a February 28 New York City forum. Part One was published in WV *No. 933 (27 March).*

PART TWO

Why did the United States invade Mexico? As Marxists, we understand that there were class interests at play; the main class pushing for the war was the slavocracy. As veteran American Trotskyist Richard S. Fraser put it, "The war was fought not just for conquest in general but more particularly to extend slavery and the political power of the slave system." The slave power's goal of expanding slavery through invading Mexico was not a secret. One Georgia newspaper stated that taking territory from Mexico would "secure to the South the balance of power in the Confederacy [i.e., the United States], and, for all coming time...give to her the control in the operations of the Government" (quoted in James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* [1988]). In his *Personal Memoirs*, Ulysses S. Grant recognized that the annexation of Texas was "from the inception of the movement to its final consummation, a conspiracy to acquire territory out of which slave states might be formed for the American Union."

The invasion was very unpopular among Northerners, and they derided it as "Mr. Polk's War," referring to then-president James Polk, a Southern Democrat. William Lloyd Garrison, one of the leading abolitionists of the day, argued in the *Liberator*: "We only hope that, if blood has had to flow, that it has been that of the American, and that the next news we shall hear will be that General Scott and his army are in the hands of the Mexicans." In 1846, Frederick Douglass denounced the annexation of Texas as "a conspiracy from beginning to end—a most deep and skillfully devised conspiracy—for the purpose of upholding and sustaining one of the darkest and foulest crimes ever committed by man" (*Belfast News Letter*, 6 January 1846).

The war was a catalyst. It caused the Southern slave masters and the Northern capitalists to become less and less compatible. It made clear, as Abraham Lincoln put it in a famous speech in 1858, that "this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free." Many Northerners felt betrayed by Polk's 1846 compromise with Britain over Oregon—which relinquished American claims to large parts of Canada and set the current U.S.-Canadian border—and opposed the invasion of Mexico. Lincoln, at the time a newly elected Whig Congressman from Illinois, denounced President Polk as a liar for declaring that Americans had been killed on American soil. Lincoln was representative of an increasing section of the Northern bourgeoisie, which, while willing to tolerate the continued existence of slavery in the South, opposed its *extension* and wanted to limit the extension of the slave power. Before the invasion, Northerners in both parties had been willing to accept the domination of the slavocracy; in the aftermath of the invasion, both parties were increasingly torn apart between their Northern and Southern wings. Former Democratic president Martin Van Buren of New York opposed the annexation of Texas and the extension of slavery; he broke from the Democrats, eventually running for president on the Free Soil party ticket in 1848.

David Wilmot, a Democratic Congressman from Pennsylvania, expressed this hostility when he attached a proviso to the appropriations bill for the invasion in 1846 that banned slavery from any territory taken from Mexico. The House of Representatives passed this proviso in both 1846 and 1847, but the Senate voted against it in both years because the South dominated the Senate. The Wilmot Proviso shows that the contradictions between the slave system in the South and the capitalist system in the North could no longer coexist in the same country. This did not mean that various representatives of both sides did not try other compromises, but these attempts were increasingly fruitless.

The End of the War

In 1848, with U.S. troops occupying much of the country, including Mexico City, Mexico signed a peace treaty with the United States—the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The treaty set the border at the Río Bravo [Rio Grande], giving the United States almost half of Mexico; in exchange, the U.S. agreed to pay Mexico $15 million and promised to keep Indians living in the United States from attacking Mexico. Even so, many Southern expansionists complained that the United States didn't get enough: many slaveholders wanted their "empire for slavery" to extend through all of Mexico into Central America, into the Caribbean and maybe even down to Brazil.

Shortly after the war, with the discovery of gold, thousands of migrants moved into California. There is a very interesting book that recently came out called *The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War* (2007) by Leonard Richards, which shows how many Southerners wanted to expand slavery to California. In 1854, the United States purchased *la Mesilla*—currently southern Arizona and southwestern New Mexico—in order to build a railroad through to California. In the United States this is usually called the Gadsden Purchase, after James Gadsden, who was the U.S. envoy who dealt with Santa Anna over this question. It is usually remembered because Gadsden was a railroad executive who stood to benefit personally from the Gadsden Purchase. It could also be called the Gadsden-Davis purchase, since Secretary of War Jefferson Davis supported the railroad as a way of connecting California to the South and expanding the power of the slavocracy over the Southwest. Davis, who also had fought in the U.S. Army in the invasion of Mexico, of course would become the leader of the Confederacy in the Civil War.

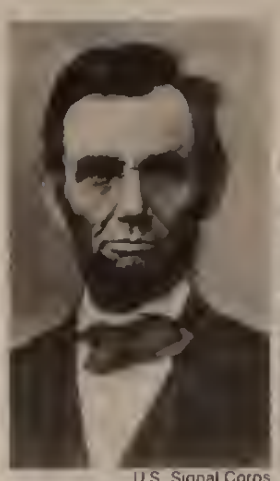
Southerners did not give up their desire to expand southward. A decade after the Mexican-American War, one Southern leader argued: "I want Cuba. I want Tamaulipas, [San Luis] Potosí, and one or two other Mexican states; and I want them all for the same reason—for the planting or spreading of slavery." Then there were the so-called Filibusters, Southern-backed Americans who tried to set up pro-slavery governments, who invaded various places in northern Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Among the most famous of these was one Dr. William Walker, who even briefly made himself president of Nicaragua in 1856. One of the things he did in his time there was to try to return slavery to Nicaragua. The U.S. also unsuccessfully tried to purchase Cuba from Spain. There was still plantation slavery practiced in Cuba. In 1898, of course, the United States fought a war against Spain to take Cuba along with Puerto Rico and the Philippines; by this time, although slavery had already been abolished, the U.S. did manage to export Jim Crow-style discrimination to these countries.

Even though the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo gave U.S. citizenship after one year to those Mexicans in

FINISH THE CIVIL WAR!
FOR BLACK LIBERATION
THROUGH SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

the new U.S. territory, these Mexicans faced racist discrimination. Many Mexican landholders had their land north of the Rio Bravo stolen from them. And Mexicans were also subjected to racist attacks by sheriffs, Texas Rangers and armed vigilantes. Between 1848 and 1928, mobs lynched at least 597 Mexicans in the U.S. The Native Americans who lived in the territory were also subjected to genocidal attacks, just as they were on the Mexican side.

For Mexico, the loss of so much of its national territory increased its instability. It would be too simple to say that the invasion of Mexico by the U.S. in 1846 led to the later U.S. imperialist domination of the country, but it did play an important role in stunting the development of Mexico. By the last quarter of the 19th century, when Mexico was under the bloody dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, American capitalists owned much of the wealth of Mexico and kept the country subjugated to enrich American imperialism.



U.S. Signal Corps

Timothy O'Sullivan

President Abraham Lincoln led the North in U.S. Civil War, the last great bourgeois-democratic revolution, which destroyed Southern slavocracy. Right: Artillery battery manned by black soldiers in 1864. Over 200,000 black troops helped ensure Northern victory.

Marxists and the Invasion of Mexico

When we were working on the flyer announcing this forum, I suggested the headline, "The Mexican-American War: A Marxist Analysis." Luckily, we didn't go with this, but it's actually a lot trickier issue than it sounds. As Marxists in the United States, we oppose the predatory expansion of the U.S. Nonetheless, in

François Seraphin Delpech

Napoleon Bonaparte

1846 the United States was not, in a Marxist sense, imperialist. Imperialism doesn't just mean a big country taking over a little country's land, but is, as Lenin explained, the last stage of capitalism, an epoch of wars and revolutions in which the world economy comes into violent collision with the barriers imposed by the capitalist nation-state. In 1846, the United States was still a developing capitalist economy and the American bourgeoisie was still, objectively speaking, a progressive class: its task of destroying chattel slavery was still outstanding.

Today, of course, the United States is the most powerful imperialist country and there is nothing progressive about the American bourgeoisie. It keeps Mexico and Latin America subjugated through trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement [NAFTA] and, if necessary, through military force. We wrote in the Programmatic Statement of the SL/U.S., "For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!":

> "A workers government in the U.S. would also return to Mexico certain contiguous regions, predominantly Spanish speaking, of the Southwest which were seized from Mexico. This internationalist gesture would powerfully undercut the anti-Yankee nationalism that the Latin American ruling classes use to tie the workers to them and would be of significant value in extending support to proletarian revolution throughout Latin America."

Although they chafe at the domination of the U.S., Mexican and other Latin American capitalists fear their own working class even more. They use the Mexican-American War, *La Invasión Norteamericana*, the North American Invasion as it's called, along with the ongoing U.S. oppression of Mexico, to tout the lie that Mexican workers and capitalists share a common interest. The Mexican bourgeoisie also seeks to obscure the fact that the United States itself is a class-divided society and that American workers are the class brothers—and increasingly the real brothers—of Mexican workers. Ending the imperialist subjugation of Latin America—and the rest of the semicolonial world—requires the working class in the U.S. taking power as part of socialist revolutions in all of the Americas. And American workers must also fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and against U.S. imperialism in Latin America and the rest of the world. It's for this reason that we oppose NAFTA, the "free trade" rape of Mexico—not for protectionist reasons, but because it has meant misery for the workers and peasants of Mexico. And opposition to anti-immigrant racism in the U.S. is also intertwined with the struggle against black oppression, as the history of the Mexican-American War shows.

In Mexico, nationalists trying to discredit socialism sometimes denounce Marx and Engels for having supported the United States invasion. And throughout the Third World, they are also sometimes labeled "racists." In 1848, Engels wrote about the war:

> "In *America* we have witnessed the conquest of Mexico and have rejoiced at it. It is also an advance when a country which has hitherto been exclusively wrapped up in its own affairs, perpetually rent with civil wars, and completely hindered in its development, a country whose best prospect had been to become industrially subject to Britain—when such a country is forcibly drawn into the historical process. It is to the interest of its own development that Mexico will in future be placed under the tutelage of the United States. The evolution of the whole of America will profit by the fact that the United States, by the possession of California, obtains command of the Pacific. But again we ask: 'Who is going to profit immediately by the war?' The bourgeoisie alone."

Several years later, in 1854, Marx wrote to Engels about the war, calling it "a worthy prelude to the military history of the great land of the Yankees." And several days later, in another letter, he praised the "Yankee sense of independence and individual proficiency" and criticized the Mexicans: "The Spanish are already degenerate. But a degenerate Spaniard, a Mexican, is an ideal."

Well, this is what is used against Marx and Engels. And Marx and Engels were wrong—but not because they were in favor of U.S. imperialism or because they were racists. The time of the Mexican-American War was very early in the development of Marxism, before the *Communist Manifesto* was published. Industrial capitalism was still in the process of development and Marx believed that it needed to fully develop in order to make proletarian revolution possible. Capitalism was then a progressive force, and Marx and Engels believed that one of its most progressive features was creating a nation with a unified working class. As a result, Marx and Engels opposed self-determination for small nations; they thought that such peoples should be assimilated into bigger nations. They mainly wrote about the Slavic peoples of Central and East Europe, but they also extended this to Mexico. In this view, the expansion of capitalism on a world scale would benefit not only the developed capitalist countries but the backward countries as well. As they wrote in the 1848 *Communist Manifesto*, "The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation."

Marx and Engels' empirical judgment on the Mexican-American War was wrong, but their theoretical premises were not incorrect. They were derived from a key experience in modern European history, which, in fact, directly affected Marx's family: the Napoleonic occupation of Germany in 1806-1813. Where he went, Napoleon, bringing with him gains of the French Revolution, overturned the remaining feudal property relations and established formal equality before the law for all social classes. In Germany, these liberal reforms, including the emancipation of Jews, gave a major impetus to the beginnings of industrial capitalism. That is, the gains of the bourgeois-democratic revolution came to western and southern Germany, large parts of Italy and even the northern Balkans, not through an indigenous revolution, but through conquest from without. In many cases it encountered reactionary resistance under the name of national independence; so for the German intellectuals of Marx's generation, a major division between the left and the right was one's retrospective attitude toward these so-called "wars of liberation," which in the German states were led by the Prussian monarchy against the Napoleonic occupation. Marx and Engels' theoretical principle that social and economic progress stands higher than national independence, when the two conflict, was correct. I would argue that Marx and Engels' attitude toward the Napoleonic occupation was a theoretical precursor to our position supporting the 1979 military intervention by the Soviet Union, a degenerated workers state, in Afghanistan (which is, in fact, not a nation).

Marx and Engels were not blind or indifferent to the monumental crimes committed by Western powers against the peoples of Asia, Africa and the Americas. But they viewed such crimes as the overhead historical cost for the modernization of these backward regions. And as I already mentioned, in the 19th century Mexico was a mess without much hope of a proletarian revolution, and American "tutelage," as Engels put it, seemed the only possible way forward. In 1853, in an article called "The Future Results of British Rule in India," Marx and Engels wrote:

> "England has to fulfill a double mission in India: one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia."

But this projection was not borne out by the actual course of development. In fact, even though the capitalists did introduce certain elements of modern industrial technology into their colonies and semicolonies, for example transportation, the overall effect was to arrest the social and economic development of backward countries. By the mid 19th century, the European bourgeoisies ceased to be a

continued on page 6

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Beard

G. Lester

Karl Marx (left) and Friedrich Engels (right). Below: Workers defend barricades in Frankfurt, Germany, during 1848 revolutions that swept Europe.

Mexican-American War...

(continued from page 5)

historically progressive class against the old feudal-derived aristocracies—with the key turning point being the defeat of the 1848 European revolutions.

Marx and Engels generalized the experiences that Europe went through during the period of the Napoleonic Wars. In the 1867 *Preface* to the first German edition of *Capital*, Marx wrote: "The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future." This statement aptly described European capitalist development in the early years of the 19th century. At the same time, this observation, which Trotsky later described as "conditional and limited" (*Lessons of October*, 1924), was at odds with the fact that European colonialism reinforced the social and economic backwardness of the countries and peoples it dominated.

Marxism is a science. It is based not on received wisdom but on observation and analysis of social reality. Marxists are not infallible, and, indeed, Marx and Engels learned from their observations and analyses of capitalist development and expansion. It wasn't long after 1848 that Marx and Engels would develop a very different attitude toward colonialism, expressed, for example, in their defense of the Sepoy rebellion in British-occupied India in 1857-58. Ireland is probably the country to which they paid the most attention because of their knowledge of the British working class. By the 1860s Marx and Engels called for Irish independence from Britain, not only out of justice for Ireland, but also as the precondition for the organization of *English* workers. By the late 19th century, Marx and Engels had become champions of colonial independence and recognized that the modernization of Asia, Africa and Latin America could take place only within the context of a world socialist order. Marx's *Capital* (written in 1867) contains biting analysis of what he called the "primitive accumulation of capital" by the blood and the death of peasants and workers and others. There is a good article in the current issue of *Workers Vanguard* that goes over the development of the Marxist position on the national question (see "The National Question in the Marxist Movement, 1848-1914," *WV* No. 931, 27 February).

More generally, imperialism had not fully developed in Marx and Engels' time. It was left to the Bolsheviks to fully grapple with the importance of the national question in the epoch of imperialism. And the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky fought against all forms of national oppression and for the right of self-determination of nations. And just as Marx recognized that the modernization of Asia, Africa and Latin America could take place only within the context of a world socialist order, Trotsky underlined in his theory of permanent revolution that in countries of belated capitalist development national liberation and social and economic modernization can take place only under the dictatorship of the proletariat, with the working class fighting to extend its revolution to the advanced capitalist countries.

In terms of the Mexican-American War, Marx and Engels, in a more specific historical sense, failed at the time to fully appreciate the fact that the invasion of Mexico strengthened the power of the *slavocracy*—the very power standing in the way of further bourgeois development. In the 1840s, they did not know very much about the U.S. But by the time of the U.S. Civil War, Marx and Engels had carefully studied the country. Marx's writings are among the most perceptive on the U.S. Civil War of any contemporary observers because he understood that the war was a *class war* between two opposed social systems.

In 1861, at the start of the Civil War, Marx wrote: "In the foreign, as in the domestic, policy of the United States, the interests of the slaveholders served as the guiding star." He mentioned in this context the U.S. attempt to purchase Cuba and pro-slavery Filibusters in northern Mexico and Central America, concluding that U.S. foreign policy "was conquest of new territory for the spread of slavery and of the slaveholders' rule" ("The North American Civil War," 1861). Marx wrote that slavery was the key issue in the Civil War, which he tied to the war with Mexico:

> "Not in the sense of whether the slaves within the existing slave states should be emancipated outright or not...but whether the 20 million freemen of the North should submit any longer to an oligarchy of 300,000 slaveholders; whether the vast Territories of the republic should be nurseries for free states or for slavery; finally, whether the national policy of the Union should take armed spreading of slavery in Mexico, Central and South America as its device."

AP

January 2008: Protest by union miners in Mexico, one day after federal and state police brutally attacked strikers at copper mine in Cananea.

The Mexican Invasion and the Coming of the Civil War

So by the time of the American Civil War, Marx recognized that the invasion of Mexico was integrally connected to the development of the slavocracy and that this was one of the key questions for American capitalism.

I want to talk a bit about the invasion of Mexico and the coming of the Civil War. The invasion of Mexico called the question: would the slavocracy or the bourgeoisie control the United States? The answer was not obvious. One of the best historians of the period, James McPherson, has said: "On the eve of the Civil War, plantation agriculture was more profitable, slavery more entrenched, slave owners more prosperous, and the 'slave power' more dominant within the South if not in the nation at large than it had ever been." And the South was increasingly belligerent. Although many Northerners wanted to compromise more with the South, especially those merchants here in New York who benefited from selling Southern cotton, it became clearer as the bourgeoisie grew that establishing a unified capitalist society would require smashing slavery—that is, another bourgeois revolution. The conquest of so much territory from Mexico directly led to the Civil War. In his *Memoirs*, Grant wrote:

> "The Southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican war. Nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times."

The immediate question posed by the Mexican invasion was: would this new land taken from Mexico be slave or free? In the San Francisco Gold Rush, tens of thousands of people rushed to California, and in 1850 the territory petitioned Congress to be admitted as a free state. This led to another crisis, and in 1850 there was another "compromise." Like its predecessors, the Compromise of 1850 merely delayed the inevitable conflict between the North and South. This compromise allowed California to enter as a free state but kept the rest of the territories conquered from Mexico in limbo, with their status to be decided when they applied for statehood sometime in the future.

This would be the last major compromise. And in fact certain parts of it—like the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, which required that Northern states return escaped slaves to their masters in the South—inflamed divisions between the North and the South even more. The 1850s were marked by the North becoming aware that its continued development as a capitalist society meant breaking free from the slave power, and the slavocracy increasingly realizing that its domination of the country was threatened. In other words, the unity between the capitalist North and the slave South was breaking down. National politics reflected this. Even though General Zachary Taylor of the Whig Party was elected president in 1848, after the war, he would be the last elected Whig president, as his party split apart between North and South over the Fugitive Slave Act.

Even many Northern Democrats could not stomach the slave power domination of the country and their party. There was a series of parties that opposed the expansion of slavery. In 1856, John C. Frémont was the first candidate to run for president for the Republican Party. He ran on the slogan of "Free soil, free speech and Frémont," which was in explicit opposition to the slavocracy. Although it was by no means an abolitionist party, the Republican Party understood that in order to safeguard the growth of capitalism, the slave power would have to be checked and the growth of slave territory stopped. The 1857 Supreme Court decision *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, which declared that Congress could not restrict slavery—and also declared that black people had no rights in the United States—made the Civil War almost inevitable. In 1860, when the first Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, was elected on the platform of stopping the expansion of slavery, the South declared that it was seceding from the Union in order to guarantee slavery, which they wrote into the Confederacy's constitution. Or as Marx put it, "the war of the Southern Confederacy is in the true sense of the word a war of conquest for the spread and perpetuation of slavery" ("The Civil War in the United States," 1861).

Without going into too much detail, I'll just say also that the Southern slavocracy maintained its designs on Mexico. During the Civil War, northern Mexico became an important geographical point for the Confederacy to try to break the Union blockade and sell cotton to Europe. According to Eugene Genovese, the Confederacy had plans to march "into New Mexico with the intention of proceeding to Tucson and then swinging south to take Sonora, Chihuahua, Durango, and Tamaulipas," and "the Confederate government tried to deal with Santiago Vidaurri, the strong man of Coahuila and Nuevo León, to bring northern Mexico into the Confederacy." At about the same time, Mexico itself was in the middle of its own war, in which Benito Juárez fought against French monarchists and Mexican conservatives like Vidaurri as he attempted to modernize Mexico.

Finish the Civil War!

The Civil War was the Second American Revolution, the last of the great bourgeois-democratic revolutions. It took four years and the deaths of some 600,000 Americans—almost as many as those who died in all other U.S. wars—to at last break the slave power. Included in this struggle were the almost 200,000 black troops who fought on the side of the Union. The North's victory in 1865 ushered in the most democratic period in U.S. history, Reconstruction. The war, by ensuring the development of American capitalism, also laid the basis for the development of the American working class—the power that can get rid of capitalism. Black workers today make up a very important component of this working class.

The Northern capitalists betrayed Reconstruction and the promise of black freedom, as they pursued the economic advantages of their victory over the Confederacy, rather than advancing black rights. Toward the end of the century, the vicious segregation of Jim Crow was imposed. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie moved from the consolidation of power nationally to the pursuit of imperialist power abroad—not least against Mexico and other Latin American countries.

Bloody American imperialism is the enemy of workers and the oppressed here in the United States and around the world. And this remains the case with President Obama, who is now planning to increase by 50 percent the imperialist troops occupying Afghanistan. The liberation of workers and peasants in Mexico and Latin America today requires socialist revolutions throughout the Americas, from the Yukon to the Yucatán, from Alaska to Argentina. We in the Spartacist League/U.S. are dedicated to forging a revolutionary class-struggle workers party that will be able to lead the working class to power in the U.S., which is what is necessary to smash U.S. imperialism. The fight for black liberation is central to this task. And that's why we raise the slogan to "Finish the Civil War! For black liberation through socialist revolution!" ■

Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S.

Adopted in 1999 at the Tenth National Conference of the SL/U.S.

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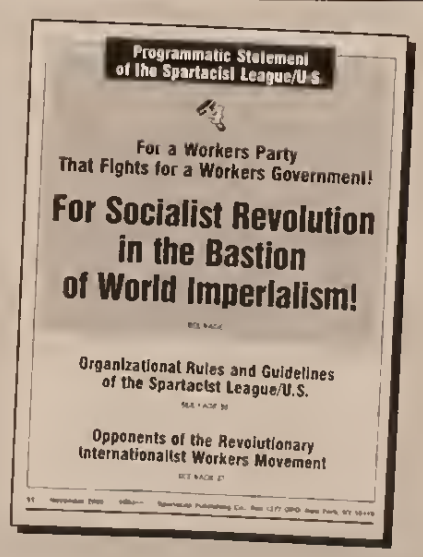


NATO...

(continued from page 2)

> ***nothing to celebrate*** in Obama's victory and much to fear. Enthusiasm among large sections of the bourgeoisie, on the other hand, is justified. After nearly eight years of one of the most incompetent and widely despised regimes in recent U.S. history, they now have in Obama a more rational face for their brutal, irrational system. Obama has also inspired illusions in the trappings of bourgeois democracy, the means by which the capitalists disguise their rule with the appearance of a popular mandate. Abroad, Obama provides an invaluable facelift for U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of the world's working people."
>
> —*Workers Vanguard* No. 925, 21 November 2008

Paris Match

Planeta Publishers

Troops from Soviet Central Asia made up large component of Red Army in Afghanistan. 1979 Soviet military intervention opened the road to emancipation of Afghan women (far right).

European Reformists Back Their Own Imperialist Rulers

For their part, the European reformists also hail Obama's victory in the name of bourgeois "lesser evil" politics. They view the Obama administration, through the lens of their own capitalist exploiters, as more reasonable and "multilateralist" than its predecessor. Thus Gregor Gysi, Oskar Lafontaine and Lothar Bisky, leaders of the social-democratic Die Linke (The Left party) in Germany, sent Obama their "most heartfelt congratulations": "The worldwide fight to eliminate poverty, for a peaceful resolution of conflicts, against the environmental catastrophe and currently against the most severe international financial crisis in 80 years, require closer cooperation and collaboration by the community of states on the basis of the rule of international law" (5 November 2008) [www.die-linke.de].

Chiming in from the "far left" was Alain Krivine, leader of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), the French section of the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat," which has since liquidated into its own creation, the openly social-democratic New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA). While acknowledging that Obama is a "defender of capitalism," Krivine enthused in the 22 January issue of the LCR's newspaper *Rouge*: "His popularity and the hopes that it raises are on a scale with the discredit, the disgust even, that Bush's policies left behind. So, let's not sulkily refuse to show our pleasure in finally seeing a total condemnation of what was one of the most reactionary presidencies of the United States. Better late than never."

As these tributes to the new top cop of U.S. imperialism underline, the reformists' opposition to certain U.S./NATO policies, like the invasion of Iraq in 2003 or sending more troops to Afghanistan today, has nothing to do with opposition to the imperialist system. Rather, they see these policies as going against the "national interests" of their own capitalist countries, which they feel would be better served through more independence from the U.S.-dominated NATO, for example through a capitalist French-German-Russian axis as Lafontaine advocates. In mobilizing for the Strasbourg demonstrations, the French NPA demands centrally that "France should renounce its integration in the military command of NATO," while reformist groups in Germany, especially the Communist Party (DKP), *Junge Welt* and the Stalinist remnants around the Communist Platform of Die Linke, campaign for German imperialism to "leave NATO."

S Pikula

Rescue teams search for bodies after U.S./NATO bombing of hospital in Belgrade, Serbia, in 1999.

In late 2002, the LCR, Rifondazione Comunista of Italy and the Socialist Workers Party and Workers Power of Britain joined in signing an appeal "To All Citizens of Europe and to All Their Representatives": "Those who show solidarity with the people of Iraq have no hearing in the White House. But we do have the chance to influence European governments—many of whom have opposed the war. We call on all the European heads of state to publicly stand against this war, whether it has UN backing or not, and to demand that George Bush abandon his war plans." What a whitewash of the German bourgeoisie of Auschwitz, of the French imperialists who soaked Algeria in blood, of the British occupiers of Northern Ireland and the Italian butchers of Ethiopia. The only reason the European imperialists are currently more reserved about embarking on their own imperialist adventures abroad is because their military power is vastly inferior to that of the U.S.

This groveling appeal amnestied the European governments that were up to their necks in the "war on terror" and the occupations of Afghanistan and the Balkans. It objectively aided the massive racist and anti-working-class attacks carried out domestically by these very same capitalist governments. Now that Obama is president, the European reformists seem to think their rulers will have a "hearing in the White House"—if only enough "mass pressure" is applied.

In the lead-up to the 1999 air war against Serbia and the invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, we of the ICL stood for the military defense of those countries against imperialist attack without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats or the bloody capitalist dictatorships of Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic. We opposed the United Nations' starvation blockade of Iraq and other imperialist UN sanctions. We underlined that every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed the world over. We call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S., NATO, EU and UN forces from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Near East, Central Asia and the Balkans. The chief means of defending the victims of neocolonial oppression against the overwhelming military might of American imperialism and its NATO allies is international working-class struggle, especially by the multiracial U.S. proletariat and its class brothers and sisters in Europe, Japan and elsewhere.

The reformists' social-chauvinism and prostration to the imperialist rulers in foreign policy is matched "at home" by their support for class collaboration and protectionism. The global economic crisis is shredding the illusion that there can be ongoing imperialist unity, either within Europe or between Europe and the U.S. Meanwhile, the West European imperialists have told their East European client bourgeoisies to go to hell. And, as always, the labor lieutenants of capitalism stand at the side of their "own" exploiters. In Germany, the SPD [Social Democratic Party], Die Linke and the trade-union bureaucracy campaign for the car manufacturer Opel, currently owned by General Motors, to "become German again." In Britain, the UNITE and GMB trade-union bureaucracies backed strikes in February of construction workers demanding "British jobs for British workers," a slogan long associated with the fascists (who joined in strike rallies) and recently affirmed by Labour prime minister Gordon Brown. Scandalously, the British section of the pseudo-Trotskyist Committee for a Workers' International, led by Peter Taaffe, apologized for and *helped lead* these reactionary strikes.

The workers movement has a vital interest in defending foreign workers, fighting for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and mobilizing against racist terror and attacks on democratic rights. The logic of reformism is inherently nationalist, splitting the working class along national, ethnic and racial lines in a scramble for the few crumbs the capitalists are willing to toss their wage slaves. To break through this losing game requires a program of international class struggle against the common capitalist enemy. As Leon Trotsky, co-leader with V.I. Lenin of the October Revolution, wrote in 1934:

> "Not to bind itself to the national state in time of war, to follow not the war map but the map of the class struggle, is possible only for that party that has already declared irreconcilable war on the national state in time of peace. Only by realizing fully the objectively reactionary role of the imperialist state can the proletarian vanguard become invulnerable to all types of social patriotism. This means that a real break with the ideology and policy of 'national defence' is possible only from the standpoint of the *international proletarian revolution*."
>
> —"War and the Fourth International"

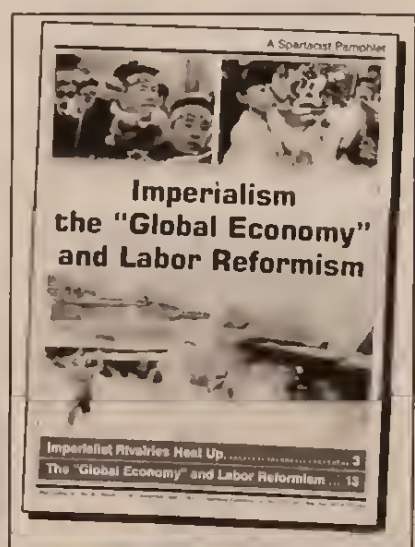
We fight in this spirit to make the working class conscious of the need to bring down racist Fortress Europe and the capitalist European Union through workers revolution. The EU is a reactionary anti-working-class alliance centered on the main European imperialist powers, which seek to improve their competitive position against their American and Japanese rivals. For a Socialist United States of Europe and an international socialist planned economy!

For New October Revolutions Worldwide!

In the 1980s, Afghanistan was also in the center of the NATO imperialists' war drive. In late 1979, the Soviet Red Army intervened in Afghanistan after repeated requests from the modernizing nationalist PDPA regime, which sought to introduce minimal social reforms and faced a U.S.-backed *jihad* (holy war) led by reactionary landlords, tribal chiefs and mullahs. The U.S. imperialists seized on the Soviet intervention as a pretext for a renewed anti-Soviet crusade, massively training and funding the reactionary *mujahedin*—mainly through the agency of the Pakistani military and its Inter-Services Intelligence—to kill Soviet soldiers. The Taliban and Al Qaeda are Frankenstein's monsters turned on their former imperialist masters.

The Soviet intervention was unambiguously progressive, underlining the Trotskyist understanding that despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state embodying historic gains of the October Revolution, centrally the planned economy and collectivized property. These were enormous gains, not least for women and the historically Muslim peoples of Soviet Central Asia. During the Soviet intervention, Afghan women militia volunteers fought with arms in hand against the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats for the basic right to not wear the *burqa* and not be sold like cattle. The international Spartacist tendency, now the ICL, said "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to extend the social gains of October to the Afghan peoples.

On the other side, the *mujahedin* and the imperialists were joined by the bulk of the reformist left internationally, who joined with their masters in howling for the withdrawal of Soviet forces. We Trotskyists of the ICL uniquely fought down the line against counterrevolution, from East Berlin to Moscow, seeking on this basis to mobilize the working masses to sweep away the sellout Stalinist bureaucrats and establish the rule of workers councils. In this, we were guided by the same revolutionary internationalist program with which we fight today to forge revolutionary workers parties as sections of a reforged Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. The road of international proletarian revolution offers the only alternative to the destruction of humanity by imperialism. ***Down with imperialism! For new October Revolutions worldwide!*** ■



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France...

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Interior of about 900,000 euros for the subsequent five years (to be more precise, 897,132.93 euros, as stipulated in the 27 January decree, confirmed on 16 February). The answer to our question is simple: officially they didn't dissolve the LCR! Thus *Rouge* (12 February) wrote in black and white:

> "In order to ensure the continuation of public assistance to political parties (based on the LCR's results obtained in the June 2007 parliamentary elections), the [LCR's "liquidation"] congress unanimously decided to maintain an 'LCR structure,' the constitution of a 'follow-up committee' and payment to the NPA of the totality of the public subsidy (after deducting the former LCR's dues to the Fourth International)."

So much for the NPA's "independence" from the capitalist state: the 900,000 euro government subsidy to the LCR was roughly equivalent to the dues paid by LCR members (part of which the latter could deduct from their taxes!) and much more significant than their annual 100,000 euro fund drive. In contrast, we have always refused on principle to take any money from any capitalist state, which is the executive committee of the capitalist class enemy. He who pays the piper calls the tune!

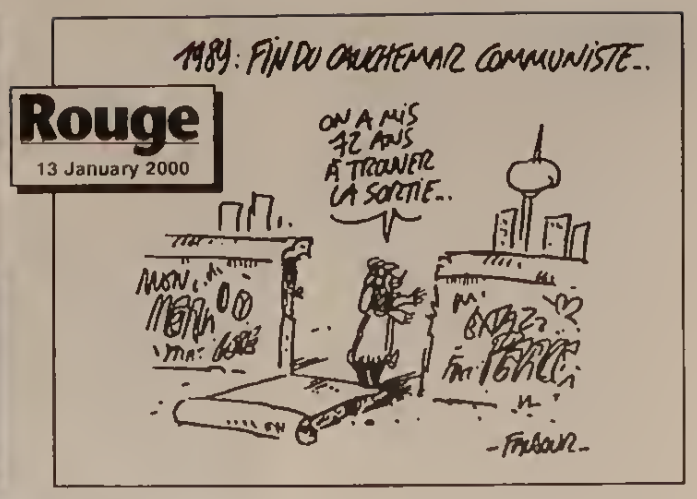
Their subsidy contradicts even the NPA's vague and classless statement in its "Founding Principles" that "It is not possible to put the state and current institutions at the service of political and social transformation." The Pabloites' attitude flows from their social-democratic understanding that the bourgeois state is in itself a neutral entity above social classes and that it cares about equally supporting all democratic organizations that participate in bourgeois elections.

Occasionally the Pabloites might complain that the state is prejudiced against the people—in order to spread the illusion that this is not always the case and could be corrected by the victims applying pressure in the streets. Thus, in their "General Resolution," they demand "effective means for community control of the police and punishment for attacks on the dignity of persons perpetrated by the forces of law and order." The idea of controlling the police is counterposed to the Marxist understanding that the state is composed of special bodies of armed men, prisons, etc., committed to defending ruling-class power through the monopoly of violence, and that it must be destroyed in a socialist revolution that puts in its place a dictatorship of the proletariat. In his work *The State and Revolution*, written in August 1917 in preparation for the October Revolution, Lenin reestablished the teachings of Marx and Engels that had been emptied of content by their epigones:

> "A state arises, a special power is created, special bodies of armed men, and every revolution, by destroying the state apparatus, clearly shows us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve *it*, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving the exploited instead of the exploiters."

Not surprisingly, the NPA boasts that it counts a capitalist judge among its founding members (see François Cous-

François Lafile



Ollvier Besancenot, spokesman for now-liquidated LCR, addresses founding conference of "New Anti-Capitalist Party" in February (left). Anti-Communist cartoon in LCR's *Rouge* showing fall of Berlin Wall reads: "1989: End of the communist nightmare." Man adds, "It took us 72 years to find the exit," referring to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

tal's fairy tale, *The Incredible Story of the New Anti-Capitalist Party*).

"Anti-Capitalism" and Anti-Sovietism

To dot the i's and cross the t's, the NPA congress decided by a clear majority in favor of the name "New Anti-Capitalist Party" rather than "Revolutionary Anti-Capitalist Party." It wouldn't have changed anything to add the word "Revolutionary," as the fakers from the former minority of Lutte Ouvrière (LO) and other fake leftists who have joined the NPA proposed in order to cover up their own reformism. But to remove it—as well as any reference in their two founding documents to

Le Bolchévik

Ernest Mandel (left) and Michel Pablo in 1988.

communism, to Lenin or Trotsky, or even to Marx, with the exception of two quotes from the *Communist Manifesto*—is an explicit pledge to the bourgeoisie that they are enemies of socialist revolution.

In fact the word "anti-capitalist" is a code word to say that they can agree that capitalism is no good and that something better is needed, but no way will they call that socialism because that could lead people to wrongly think of "real socialism," i.e., the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. Today the regroupment of the "left of the left," as offered up by the NPA, is based on shared hatred for the first workers state in history and on shared support to capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR and Eastern Europe by those organizations who have signed up for the NPA (principally the LCR but also LO's former minority, Gauche Révolutionnaire [Taalfeites], the CRI group [ex-Lambertist], etc.). We, in contrast, defended the USSR and its gains for the workers of the world against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution right to the very end. Today, the disarray of the capitalist economy, which workers are being called on to pay for, highlights the murderous anarchy of this system and the intrinsic superiority of a planned economy, even in spite of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucratic excrescence that existed in the USSR after 1924. In particular, we intervened in the DDR [East Germany] in 1989-1990 when there was an incipient proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy; we called for a red Germany of workers councils and opposed capitalist reunification of Germany. We lost, but we were the only ones to have fought against capitalist reunification.

In the NPA's "Founding Principles" you can find, if you look hard enough, a sentence near the end that says, "A social revolution [not a socialist revolution] will be necessary to overthrow capitalism." In reality this is just a variation of their reformist "revolutionize society" or, as Mitterrand put it in the 1970s, "break with capitalism." They continue: "Our choice for how to get there is exclusively through the expression and participation of a majority," i.e., bourgeois-democratic elections (supported by mobilization in the streets). This is exactly what they lay out in their "General Resolution": they are for "putting an end to the Fifth Republic by a constituent process for an anti-capitalist social republic" and "the abolition of the Senate."

Down With Executive Offices of the Bourgeois State!

The NPA is really trying to show the capitalists that they are reasonable and responsible and capable of governing, and they regularly put forward a candidate for President of the republic, i.e., the head of the capitalist state. In contrast, we oppose any participation in the bourgeois executive and thus we also oppose running for executive office in the bourgeois state, such as president or mayor, because running for such posts feeds illusions that one could administer the bourgeois state in the interest of the working class, negating the need to fight for a socialist revolution [see *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 60, Autumn 2007]. As Rosa Luxemburg said over a hundred years ago: "The entry of a socialist into a bourgeois government is not, as it is thought, a partial conquest of the bourgeois state by the socialists, but a partial conquest of the socialist party by the bourgeois state." Thus the CP in France took direct responsibility for managing capitalism as part of the government in 1944-1946, 1981-1984, 1997-2002, and they also ran working-class municipalities for decades. Claiming to want to improve the daily lives of people in working-class suburbs, they administered for example the capitalist housing shortage, with its inevitable racist quotas in assigning subsidized housing. They demoralized countless militants who wanted to fight for socialism.

In the past, the Pabloites considered it "taboo" to *openly* speak about their lust for governmental power under capitalism. Now they have made it into a question of principle, declaring in their "Founding Principles" (approved by 540 votes in favor and one against): "From the municipality to parliament, we will support all measures which would improve the workers' lot, democratic rights and respect for the environment. *We will contribute to implementing them if the voters give us this responsibility*" (our emphasis).

The Pabloites have a long history of exercising the responsibilities of executive office in the bourgeois state: starting with Pablo as an adviser in the post-independence Algerian government and continuing in Martinique in the early 1970s, where they had at least one "revolutionary" mayor, Jean Elie, the local representative of the colonial state apparatus (see [the LCR's newspaper] *Rouge* No. 188, 20 January 1973). Then in Switzerland in the late 1980s their leader Hanspeter Uster was elected minister of Justice and Police in the Zug canton. Most recently, in the 23 January *Rouge*, the LCR interviewed an "anti-capitalist mayor" in Kabylia [Algeria], Mohand Saddek Akrour, a member of the PST, their sister party in Algeria. He acknowledges that "two-thirds of our [town] budget is directly managed by the prefecture [regional government], while the remaining third goes to private business"!

But the Pabloites' proudest ministerial post came in Brazil at the beginning of this decade, when one of their leaders, Miguel Rossetto, who had previously been vice-governor of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, was named minister of agrarian development in the Lula [Luiz Inácio da Silva of the Workers Party] government. Of course Rossetto was not the real Minister of Agriculture, but he was still the one responsible for lulling millions of landless peasants

Le Bolchévik

Far left: May 1981 issue of LCR newspaper *Rouge* calls for vote to Cold War "socialist" Mitterrand. Left: Union protest at Citroën-Aulnay auto plant, 1982. Immigrant workers played key role in auto strikes against Mitterrand's popular-front austerity in 1982-83. In response Mitterrand's government launched a racist campaign.

with the illusion that he was going to give them some land taken from the big landlords, while at the very same time Lula's military police continued their job of "restoring order" in the countryside with baton blows and bullets. Rossetto, doubtless dizzy with success, ended up dropping the Pabloites, who went on to form a new organization, the PSoL, which aroused great hopes in the USec before mysteriously fading into the background.

The Fable of Independence Vis-à-Vis the SP

Today, Besancenot has built up his business based on "opposition" to "social-liberalism" [social democrats who have embraced neo-liberal capitalism] and "independence" from the SP. The NPA realizes that many activists and working-class voters feel bitter towards the Mitterrand and Jospin SP governments (which had CP participation half the time) as well as towards the SP today. In the 1990s, especially in the wake of the destruction of the USSR, it was these parties (elected every time with the Pabloites' votes) that were in charge of implementing capitalist austerity programs to attack the working class, immigrants and their children.

The social-democratic parties (whether the SP or CP, or in Germany the SPD or Die Linke [see "Germany: SPD in Deep Crisis—Left Party: No Alternative!" in *WV* No. 928, 16 January]) are bourgeois workers parties, torn by the contradiction between their pro-capitalist program and leadership and their trade-union base. Revolutionary Marxists seek to set the working-class base of these parties against the top in order to build the revolutionary party required to carry out a successful workers revolution.

To ensure the survival of its huge (although rapidly shrinking) apparatus, the CP depends on its electoral deals with the SP to preserve their control of working-class municipalities and to get people elected to parliament, with the state subsidies this brings in. The LCR/NPA, on the other hand, with its smaller operation, as well as the 900,000 euro bonanza from the capitalist state, can claim some level of independence from the SP, which boosts its popularity.

But the LCR's "independence" from the SP is unfailingly transformed, as soon as the first round of voting is over, into calls to "fight the right" in the second round. In Marseilles, their comrades called for votes for the SP-led slate in the 2008 municipal elections, even after the SP had fused its slate with the right-wing bourgeois party MoDem [a Christian-Democratic party]! In those elections they went so far as to propose to the SP a systematic fusion of their slates in the second round, i.e., agreeing to contribute to the victory of popular-front municipal majorities and to participate in them, with the proviso that the LCR might from time to time register a token vote against certain measures (token because the electoral system provides a bonus to a slate that won by a narrow margin, granting it a stable and comfortable majority). But the SP refused their offer.

That didn't stop the LCR from hunting down opportunities elsewhere to join municipal majorities. At Gentilly, on the outskirts of Paris, they participate in running the capitalist municipality, having been elected on the first round as part of the incumbent CP mayor's slate. At bottom, the Pabloites' raison d'être, like Mélenchon's Left Party, is to put pressure on the SP to become less "social-liberal" and form a "left" popular front—a capitalist coalition of bourgeois workers parties with outright bourgeois formations—to defeat Sarkozy. The Pabloites will support it, from within—or perhaps from outside, since they know very well that if they lie down before the "social-liberals" and enter their government, as their comrades recently did in Brazil, or if they slavishly support their official parliamentary majority as in Italy, they would be booted out in the subsequent elections.

But the Pabloites need workers mobilizations in the streets to put pressure on the SP. And the slightest hint of struggle exposes how the NPA seeks unity at any price with the SP ("a united policy towards the whole social and political left," as the NPA's "General Resolution" puts it). In a 21 January interview in the CP paper, *L'Humanité*, Besancenot said concerning the January 29 trade-union mobilization:

> "In this context, the left can come together and decide on a nationwide initiative against layoffs, as we had proposed in mid-December to all parties, including the SP. Unfortunately we have not received any answer."

They finally did get an answer: for the first time since the election of the Jospin-Buffet government in 1997, the SP made a show of force with a massive mobilization of its members in the January 29 workers demonstrations. Starting with their congress last November, the SP realized they had to go back to a more traditional social-democratic line of opposing the right and claiming to be on the side of the workers, or risk continuing to lose crucial elections. Then on February 3 the SP, CP, MRC (bourgeois Chevènementists), Left Party, NPA and LO signed a joint statement congratulating themselves on the success of the 29 January day of action and demanding the government offer a "social shield" to the poor against the current wave of layoffs. The SP signed the call to "impose a different division of the wealth and another kind of development" and immediately used the credibility that such joint statements with the "left of the left" gave them to propose a plan for "getting out of the crisis" in higher education (see *Le Monde*, 12 February).

Der Spiegel

Lech Walesa prays in front of Gdansk shipyard, 1980. Striking workers shook Polish Stalinist regime but knelt before Catholic church. Spartacists fought against Solidarność counterrevolution. LCR called for "Solidarity with Solidarność."

We saw another example of the NPA's "unity in struggle" with the threat to privatize the post office, an important subject for the NPA given that their trademark rests on the "little postman," Besancenot. Far from proposing an important class struggle, a solid strike, the LCR/NPA promotes committees of consumers against privatization, where one finds all mixed up together village mayors (i.e., the municipal representatives of the privatizing state!) and users of the post office from all social classes. The Pabloites cynically use the workers' desire for unity in struggle against the bosses to unite not only with the treacherous social-democratic leaderships of the workers movement, but with the class enemy itself.

Nationalization or Socialization vs. Revolutionary Expropriation

At its conference, the NPA decided on a hodgepodge of reformist "social emergency" demands for the economic crisis, like 300 euros more per month for a 1,500 euro minimum wage, a ban on layoffs, etc. One could say they thought of everything, including: "For companies which turn out to be really struggling, financing will be assured by a banking public service and sustained by a special assessment paid by all shareholders" ("General Resolution"). In other words, the capitalist state should subsidize unprofitable companies through a tax on capital.

In their "Founding Principles" they do plenty of "Sunday speechifying" about "ending...private property of the main means of production." They offer ringing declarations for "Nationalization (in the sense of socialization) of all banking organizations with no buyouts or compensation, and expropriation of their shareholders" ("General Resolution"). Besancenot explains in an interview published in their new journal, *Contretemps* (No. 1, First Quarter 2009):

> "Faced with capitalism, social democracy and Stalinism insinuated that the solution was the state ownership of the means of production. Our reading has never been that, but rather the perspective of the socialization of the means of production. For us, public intervention means intervention by the majority of the population and not necessarily by the state. This is one of the essential issues of what we call '21st-century socialism,' which others call 'eco-socialism,' 'libertarian self-management,' 'communism with a human face.'"

Behind their "majority of the population" and their rhetoric about democracy, they avoid the fundamental question: who owns the means of production?

One can easily get lost in the Pabloites' declarations: in accordance with the milieu they're capitulating to they are for nationalizations under capitalism (the classic social-democratic/Labourite solution) or on the other hand for "self-management" under capitalism (the social-democratic solution in the style of the CFDT [trade-union federation] in the 1970s). When it comes to capitalist property, the Pabloites are ready for anything—except its expropriation by a revolutionary proletarian government, i.e., the Marxist program of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its international extension. That's the only program that can reorganize and plan the economy rationally in the interest of the workers and the oppressed.

The LCR's Reformist Emergency Plan

But the Pabloites explicitly reject the model of the Russian Revolution. For example, Olivier Besancenot and Daniel Bensaïd write in their latest book:

> "Revolutionary in the actual sense of the term, this anti-capitalist party hasn't signed up to one single political lineage, that of the struggle issuing out of the Russian Revolution and the opposition pitting Stalinists against anti-Stalinists....
> "We anti-capitalists give a radical logic to the reforms we fight for; this logic is inscribed from now on in the perspective of the future. These reforms are consistent with and contradictory to the market economy. They carry within them the will to develop other social relations where wealth and power would be subjects of a collective division. To carry them out to the end, a radical break with the existing order is unavoidable."
>
> —Besancenot and Bensaïd, *Let's Take a Side—For a Socialism of the 21st Century* [Prenons Parti—Pour un Socialisme du XXIe Siècle]

For the Pabloites, it's the struggle for reforms that is "revolutionary"! This is the same kind of talk we hear from Mélenchon of the Left Party, who declares himself to be "breaking with capitalism" (19 January interview in *L'Humanité*), and it is the very opposite of Trotsky's Transitional Program, which said:

> "The strategic task of the Fourth International lies not in reforming capitalism but in its overthrow. Its political aim is the conquest of power by the proletariat for the purpose of expropriating the bourgeoisie....
> "The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old 'minimal' demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary, perspective. Insofar as the old partial, 'minimal' demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism—and this occurs at each step—the Fourth International advances a system of ***transitional demands***, the essence of which is contained in the fact that ever more openly and decisively they will be directed against the very foundations of the bourgeois regime. The old 'minimal program' is superseded by the ***transitional program***, the task of which lies in systematic mobilization of the masses for the proletarian revolution."

At bottom, the LCR's maximum program is the welfare state such as was conceded by the capitalists at the end of World War II to avoid a workers revolution after the Red Army had liberated

continued on page 10

Spartakist

East Berlin, 3 January 1990: ICL-initiated 250,000-strong demonstration at Treptow Park against fascist desecration of Soviet war memorial and in defense of East German and Soviet workers states. Banner reads: "For a Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist Europe."

France...

(continued from page 9)

Europe from Nazi barbarism. In the name of its class-collaborationist alliance with the Gaullists, the CP betrayed the very real possibility of overthrowing French capitalism, discredited by its long collaboration with the Nazis. But since the Pabloites oppose the proletarian revolution, they exonerate the Stalinist PCF and boast of the gains won:

> "The French public sector was put in place at the time of the Liberation, at the same time as the nationalizations put forward in the program of the National Resistance Council, written when they were underground in 1944, against the Vichy state. The objective was to liberate the country and then rebuild it by providing solid infrastructures, conceived as ambitious tools of an industrial reconstruction policy but also as a plan for a society based on solidarity and the satisfaction of social needs. Thus at the close of the war, energy, transport, auto, banks and insurance companies constituted a great public pole. These nationalizations gave the state the means to carry out a real economic policy and allowed it to commit to long-term investment. They also represented authentic social gains, drawn up and imposed by the Resistance movements."
>
> —*Let's Take a Side*

One might ask if Besancenot and Bensaïd copied all that from a history book for high school kids, with a foreword by Education Minister Xavier Darcos of the UMP [Sarkozy's ex-Gaullist party]. The gains during Liberation [immediate post-World War II period] were won at the cost of the CP betraying the revolutionary opportunities that followed from the Soviet victory in the war and the hatred of the French working class at that time for their own bourgeoisie, which had sided with Vichy and the Nazis. The NPA is promising here that it will betray the next class battles by limiting them to reforms, which are eminently reversible under capitalism, as the history of the "welfare state" has so bitterly proved. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92 paved the way for the attacks on the welfare state, and the Pabloites have their own share of responsibility for these attacks because they actively supported the counterrevolution.

To implement their emergency plan, they say: "It is by developing and generalizing struggles, by generalized and prolonged strikes, that we can block attacks and impose demands" ("Founding Principles"). The recent editorial in *Lutte Ouvrière* (23 February) is very similar, saying: "The only way is to put the big bosses under threat of a general strike likely to cost them a lot more than what it would take to satisfy the legitimate demands of the workers and retirees." Well, if such a huge class struggle is posed, then the miserable crumbs these guys are asking for are a cheap reward for betraying the struggle for power. In the meantime, LO and the NPA provide a chunk of the lower- and mid-level trade-union bureaucracy, which is cynically using the "days of action," no matter how powerful they are, every couple of months, to let the working class blow off steam.

Pabloite Foreign Policy: An Alternative Program for French Imperialism

Marxists struggle intransigently against their own imperialism, one of the most bloody in the history of humanity, from the slaughter of 1914-18 to the colonial wars that caused millions of deaths in Indochina, Madagascar, Algeria and elsewhere, or more recently the genocide in Rwanda. We are for the immediate withdrawal of French troops from the Balkans, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Africa and elsewhere. Lenin explains in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* how imperialism is not a set of policies that can be changed, but a system that is the inevitable outcome of capitalist development: the main powers (including France at the time) have divided up the world among themselves, at first in the form of colonial empires and other spheres of influence and since then in the continual struggle among these powers to redivide the world. These rivalries, once somewhat masked by the common goal of destroying the Soviet Union, have come back to the fore today.

The Pabloites have an *alternative* policy for French imperialism. Basically, they hark back nostalgically to the foreign policy of [former president Jacques] Chirac during the second Gulf War in 2003, when he opposed American plans to devastate and occupy Iraq (moreover, the LCR had just voted for him a few months earlier). What the LCR advocates is a policy of European alliance, meaning an alliance with Germany, in order to counter the American superpower in the world. To put one's own imperialist bourgeoisie on a different plane than American imperialism, presenting it as

no credit

Fake-Trotskyist Miguel Rossetto, who served as minister of agrarian development in Brazil's capitalist government led by Lula, shakes hands with Pope John Paul II.

potentially a tool for "peace," is vulgar *social-chauvinism*. Thus the Pabloites signed pro-European, anti-Bush declarations during the Iraq war, such as this one from the end of 2002:

> "Those who show solidarity with the people of Iraq have no hearing in the White House. But we do have the chance to influence European governments—many of whom have opposed the war. We call on all the European heads of state to publicly stand against this war, whether it has UN backing or not, and to demand that George Bush abandon his war plans."

And that is their argument with "Sarko the American": Sarkozy considers French imperialism too weak to attempt the least confrontation with the American behemoth. That's why the Pabloites are opposed to French troops in Lebanon and Afghanistan—because in their view they serve the interests of American imperialism rather than France's interests as the Pabloites see them. Thus, last summer they signed a declaration protesting the sending of additional French troops to Afghanistan, stating in part:

> "In addition to the victims, which we fear will be more numerous, the decision to send reinforcements is the sign of an unacceptable lineup with United States policy. The desire to reintegrate the NATO military command goes in the same direction. France must not endorse NATO's Manichean vision of a 'war of civilizations' and must not give up on imposing an independent policy, for the primacy of international law and against war. This policy runs the risk of dragging the entire European Union into becoming a mere 'European pillar' of NATO, a source of new military expenses to the detriment of immense social needs. We do not want a France and a European Union acting as world policemen. We want France and Europe to be free and independent, developing cooperation with all countries in favor of peace, sustainable development and human rights."

For our part, we have always been opposed to NATO, which was for 40 years an anti-Soviet imperialist alliance before becoming a military instrument in the service of Western imperialists, above all the U.S.A., against the peoples of the world. But we have also always been opposed to the European Union and its predecessors, which through their economic ties maintained the military cohesion of NATO against the USSR. Today, the European Union is an (increasingly unstable) consortium dominated by imperialist powers, i.e., Germany and to a lesser extent France. Even Germany, the economic and, especially, the industrial colossus of Europe, has to lean on a European hinterland in order to resist the Americans, and this is the goal of the EU, a capitalist alliance at the expense of the working classes of Europe and a racist fortress against immigrants. *Dawn with NATO! Down with the European Union! Full citizenship rights for all those who are here! Down with xenophobic restrictions against East European workers!* We denounce, in advance, the chauvinist anti-American hysteria that we are going to see during the ceremonies for the 60th anniversary of NATO in early April, and we denounce in advance the vile role that the NPA will play in this.

From Liquidation of the Party to Liquidation of the Revolution

By liquidating the revolutionary party starting in the 1950s, the Pabloites ended up liquidating any claim to revolution. And having contributed as much as its forces permitted to the capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR (see our February supplement on Pabloite liquidationism), they now disappear Lenin and the Russian Revolution, which are not even mentioned in either of their two lengthy founding documents (the "Founding Principles" and the "General Resolution"). As we said in our February supplement, it is a good thing the Pabloites no longer pretend to be Trotskyists or Marxists.

And they continue their support to capitalist counterrevolution today in regard to the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state. The NPA's "General Resolution" thus makes a special mention of "Support to the Tibetan people oppressed by China," just a few weeks from the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Tibet by the Chinese People's Liberation Army from the Dalai Lama's theocratic, proslavery regime. In contrast, we denounce the provocations of the imperialists and the Dalai Lama against the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state and stand for the unconditional military defense of China (as well as North Korea, Cuba and Vietnam) against imperialism and counterrevolution, while fighting for proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy [see "Defend the Gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution!" *WV* No. 923, 24 October 2008].

There will be new class struggles and new revolutionary situations in France. Then, the Pabloites will perhaps suddenly rediscover the language of Marxism. But whatever form they then take, whether they are still the NPA or something else, it will be used to better mask their program of capitulation and liquidation. These are opponents of the international revolutionary workers movement. It is the International Communist League which represents the continuity of the struggle against Pabloism, through the American SWP of James P. Cannon of the 1950s, when it was still a revolutionary vanguard party, and then through the Revolutionary Tendency which emerged inside the SWP at the beginning of the 1960s in order to defend the program of authentic Trotskyism against the SWP that itself had gone over to embracing Pabloism. This is the continuity of the struggle to maintain a revolutionary program and to reforge the Fourth International on a political basis that Trotsky would recognize as his own. *For new October Revolutions!* ■

AP

Students join thousands of protesting workers in Marseilles, March 19. Across France, over three million joined union-led protests against President Sarkozy's economic policies.

Spartacist League Debates Ernest Mandel

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Education...

(continued from page 3)

Contingents Unite (CCU), a formation in the PSC that seeks to pressure the existing PSC leadership to adopt a more militant posture. What they really offer is the same class-collaborationist strategy, organizing protests outside Paterson's office and distributing a November 18 fact sheet on CUNY and SUNY budget cuts, which mobilizes people to go to the Board of Trustees meeting and contact "your local representatives" in the Democratic-controlled New York State Assembly, Senate and City Council. They draw no class line against the Democratic Party in their fact sheet and newsletters.

Telling of the political basis for this lash-up is CCU member Jennifer Gaboury's February 2 open letter to Hunter College president Jennifer Raab, signed by other prominent members of CCU. In reference to "labor and contract issues," Gaboury advises Raab that "the head of a college has a bully pulpit from which to take a stand on an issue that is central to the health and success of the college." Such appeals can only build illusions in the anti-union campus administration. At a November 2008 rally, IG supporter Sándor John carried a sign referring to CUNY Chancellor Goldstein that called to "Cut his salary—or lay *him* off!" So while the IG criticizes the ISO for calling on the college president to "support students protests," the IG's John is calling on the Board of Trustees, the top body of the CUNY administration, to pick a different henchman or at least pay the current one less! We say: Abolish the administration! For worker/student/teacher control of the universities!

Young Spartacus

IG pushes illusions in benevolence of bourgeois campus administration and Board of Trustees, carries sign demanding "Bail Out CUNY!" at CUNY Graduate Center protest, 22 September 2008.

The ubiquitous Sándor John is also listed as a contact together with ISO spokesman Doug Singsen on a March 4 press release that bemoans: "For several decades, the city and state have been rolling back their commitment to provide a quality higher education for all New Yorkers." Tell that liberal pabulum to the poor, largely black and minority youth trapped in inner-city holding pens more segregated today than in the past four decades! The capitalist class' "commitment" to education extends only so far as they believe it will serve their interests, and in a period of capitalist economic crisis, social services, including education, are first on the chopping block.

The ISO is defined by its support for counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union, which was a devastating defeat for workers and the oppressed internationally. As Trotskyists, we stand for unconditional military defense of the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states —Cuba, North Korea, China and Vietnam—against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, and for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies and replace them with workers democracy based on revolutionary internationalism. As a centrist, sometimes revolutionary in words but reformist in deeds, Sándor John may, rarely, say the same thing. But the ISO is on to something when they make John their contact person while excluding us Spartacists, who sharply raise political differences, from their "public" events. The ISO can depend on the IG not to expose their treacherous politics, past or present, because the IG is simply pushing the same tired campus pressure politics in more inflated, militant language. (See "IG Disappears Red Army Fight Against Islamic Reaction in Afghanistan," *WV* No. 772, 11 January 2002.)

When it comes to the Commander-in-Chief of racist U.S. imperialism, the IG presents its opposition to Obama like the reformists do, as a question of policy. Comically, they wrote in "No to Teacher-Basher McCain and Education-for-War Obama" (*The Internationalist* online, November 2008) that Obama wouldn't be "teacher- and student-friendly" because "Obama himself was educated in an elite private school in Hawaii and went on to the elite private institutions of Columbia University and Harvard Law School. He has no real experience of the public schools except from the outside." By this criterion, CCNY graduate Colin Powell, imperialist war criminal and former Secretary of State, would be a better candidate! As revolutionary Marxists, we oppose Democratic Party politicians and politicians of all capitalist parties on principle, not because of policy differences or "experience," but because they are agents of the capitalist class enemy.

As for the centrists, Leon Trotsky, leader of the Left Opposition and defender of the banner of the 1917 Russian Revolution, aptly noted: "A centrist always remains in spiritual dependence on rightist groupings and is inclined to cringe before those who are more moderate, to remain silent on their opportunist sins and to cover up their actions before the workers" ("Centrism and the Fourth International," 22 February 1934). The IG provides a pseudo-Marxist cover for the rotten campus reformists and the class-collaborationists in the unions, who tie the working class and militant youth to the system of capitalist exploitation. By combating the politics of these opportunist frauds, the Spartacus Youth Club seeks to win students to the revolutionary Marxist program that can free working people worldwide from the obsolete system of capitalist exploitation, which threatens us all with annihilation. The only way out is through world socialist revolution, led by a vanguard party modeled after the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky that led the October 1917 Russian Revolution.■

North Korea...

(continued from page 12)

international working class, nuclear weapons are necessary.

The greatest menace to the workers and oppressed of the world is U.S. imperialism, whose rulers have not only acquired the means to destroy the world several times over, but have actually carried out nuclear holocaust, incinerating some 200,000 Japanese people in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. This slaughter was not only aimed at Japan, but, in fact, primarily intended as a threat against the Soviet Union, the world's first workers state, born through the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the only successful workers revolution to date. In his Prague speech, Obama arrogantly intoned, "as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act." I.e., the U.S. imperialist mass murderers have the "moral responsibility" to ride roughshod over any country that would stand up to them.

The U.S. capitalist rulers have tried to crush North Korea ever since capitalist/landlord rule was overthrown there under the protection of the Soviet Army following World War II. In their drive to "roll back" not only the social revolution in Korea but also the Chinese Revolution of 1949, the U.S. and its imperialist allies, under the aegis of the UN, devastated the Korean peninsula in the Korean War of 1950-53, killing some three million people. During this war, the Joint Chiefs of Staff deliberated about using nuclear bombs, and came close to it several times. The U.S. imperialists' war drive was finally stopped by the heroic struggle of Korea's workers and peasants, with the aid of a massive Chinese military intervention. But from 1957 to 1991, the U.S. kept a stockpile of nuclear weapons close to the Demilitarized Zone, designed to intimidate the then non-nuclear North. The Korean War ended with a cease-fire, but the U.S. has refused to sign a peace treaty. There are still some 28,500 U.S. troops in capitalist South Korea alongside the South Korean military, dedicated to destroying North Korea. U.S. troops out of Korea now!

The defense of the North Korean and other deformed workers states against imperialism is undermined by the rule of the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies, whose policies are encapsulated in the dogma of "building socialism in one country," expressed as *Juche* (self-reliance) in North Korea. The Stalinists oppose the fight for international proletarian revolution and instead pursue the futile quest for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. A case in point is the Beijing bureaucracy's treacherous partnership with the U.S., Japan and others in the attempt to disarm North Korea. In 2006, after Pyongyang conducted its first nuclear test, China criminally voted for sanctions against North Korea in the UN Security Council as well as for the UN resolution banning all ballistic missile tests by the North Korean regime. While not condemning North Korea's April 5 rocket launch, Beijing is pressuring Pyongyang into resuming the "six-party talks"—involving the U.S., China, Japan, Russia and the two Koreas—whose aim is none other than to disarm North Korea. Beijing's craven appeasement of the imperialist drive against North Korea is particularly dangerous to China's own defense.

Since the early 1990s, North Korea has suffered from widespread malnutrition, the absence of access to critical resources and the decay of its industry. This is the direct product of the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, which had been the North's main economic partner. At the same time, Kim Jong Il's nepotistic and mythologized regime heads a parasitic, Stalinist bureaucratic caste whose extreme nationalism and class-collaborationist politics undermine the defense of North Korea. In 2007, Pyongyang agreed to shut down its nuclear facilities in exchange for fuel aid and steps toward the normalization of relations with the United States and Japan, revealing their dangerous illusions that these imperialists can be appeased. The North Korean Stalinists have also long called for "peaceful reunification" with the South, which is a recipe for reunification on the basis of capitalist wage slavery.

What is desperately needed is the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party with a proletarian internationalist perspective to lead the struggle for the revolutionary reunification of Korea—for socialist revolution in the South and workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats in the North. The fight for revolutionary reunification must be linked to the struggle for proletarian political revolution in China and the extension of proletarian power to Japan, the industrial heartland of Asia, as well as to the U.S. imperialist colossus.■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Imperialist Saber Rattling Over Rocket Launch

Defend North Korea!

APRIL 7—As the leaders of the U.S. and West European imperialist powers gathered in France and Germany to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the anti-Communist NATO alliance, North Korea launched a rocket intended to put a satellite into orbit. The April 5 launch has been seized upon by the U.S. and Japanese imperialists to increase economic and military pressure against North Korea and raise a hue and cry over Pyongyang's nuclear capability. An array of military might was ready to go into action in the waters between North Korea and Japan and in the skies off the North Korean coast. Two U.S. destroyers—the USS *McCain* and USS *Chafee*—equipped with Aegis technology intended to track and destroy missiles had left Sasebo port in southwestern Japan. For its part, the Japanese government sent its own Aegis-class destroyers and threatened to fire Patriot missiles supposedly targeting "debris" that might fall on Japan. South Korea also dispatched an Aegis-equipped destroyer off the east coast to monitor the launch.

Japanese prime minister Taro Aso denounced the launch as "an extremely provocative act," while U.S president Barack Obama, speaking in Prague, asserted, "North Korea broke the rules once again by testing a rocket that could be used for long range missiles." He added, "Now is the time for a strong international response." Both the U.S. and Japanese imperialists are calling for a United Nations Security Council resolution condemning North Korea.

As Trotskyists, we call for the unconditional military defense of the North Korean deformed workers state, as well as the deformed workers states of China, Cuba and Vietnam, against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. North Korea's rocket launch has been hysterically characterized by most bourgeois commentators as the product of a bizarre, deranged and rogue dictatorship. But North Korea's rocket launch is not only rational—its Taepodong-2 rocket could indeed be critical to making nuclear weapons deliverable, acting as a deterrent against U.S. imperialism's unrelenting threats. For the defense of the workers state, a historic gain of the

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"New Anti-Capitalist Party" Founded in France

"Death of Communism" Leftists in New Guise

The following article is reprinted from Le Bolchévik *No. 187, March 2009, the publication of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League.*

LE BOLCHEVIK

The founding conference of the New Anti-Capitalist Party [Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste] (NPA) took place at Plaine-Saint-Denis near Paris from February 6 to 8, beginning one day after Olivier Besancenot's Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) voted to dissolve itself at its final conference. The NPA adopted "Founding Principles" and a "General Resolution on the Political and Social Situation"; it also adopted interim statutes, elected a 192-person leadership and decided, pending the latest negotiations with the Communist Party (CP) and Left Party [recent split from the Socialist Party], to run on its own in the upcoming European Union (EU) elections.

The Socialist Party (SP), showing its fear of competition from the NPA on the terrain of social democracy, commented that people shouldn't be fooled by the NPA's democratic airs because really they are just unreconstructed Trotskyists and proponents of "the most extreme archaism" (as SP Senator Henri Weber put it in the 7 February issue of *Le Monde*), in other words "Soviet-style totalitarianism." Nothing could be further from the truth: the NPA is a new social-democratic formation that wants to cash in on the LCR's support for capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and East Europe, as well as the death agony of the CP. That's why they denounce the Russian Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. They want to be recognized as France's "21st-century socialists," i.e., social democrats to replace the "20th-century socialists," the SP and CP.

Far from being Trotskyists, Besancenot's forebears, led by Michel Pablo and his lieutenant Ernest Mandel, destroyed Trotsky's Fourth International in the early 1950s. As we documented in our February supplement on the history of Pablo liquidationism: "The common thread defining the whole history of Pabloism for more than 50 years has been looking for a substitute for building a Leninist party." In the 1950s the Pabloites liquidated, wherever they could, into the Stalinist CPs (and elsewhere into social-democratic or petty-bourgeois nationalist organizations). In the 1980s their leading section, the French LCR, supported [former president François] Mitterrand's Cold War popular front and the forces that were committed to restoring capitalism in the former Soviet Union: notably, they supported the CIA-financed mullahs then fighting in Afghanistan against the Red Army, Solidarność's Catholic counterrevolutionaries in Poland, and finally Boris Yeltsin's barricades as Yeltsin took power in August 1991 to restore capitalism in Russia. Thereby the Pabloites became the hardcore social democrats that they are today. The International Communist League alone stands on the principles and program of revolutionary Marxism, based on the historical lessons dearly paid for by the working class. Our goal is to establish communism worldwide. As we say in our International Declaration of Principles [*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 54, Spring 1998]:

> "The victory of the proletariat on a world scale would place unimagined material abundance at the service of human needs, lay the basis for the elimination of classes and the eradication of social inequality based on sex and the very abolition of the social significance of race, nation and ethnicity. For the first time mankind will grasp the reins of history and control its own creation, society, resulting in an undreamed-of emancipation of human potential, and a monumental forward surge of civilization."

In spite of its later degeneration at the hands of a Stalinist bureaucracy that usurped political power beginning in 1924, the Russian Revolution showed that it was possible for the working class to overthrow capitalism, ushering in an unprecedented development of the productive forces. The fundamental lesson of the Russian Revolution is that to emancipate humanity the working class needs a revolutionary communist vanguard to lead it, at the head of all the oppressed, in the overthrow of this rotting capitalist system. That's why we say we are the party of the Russian Revolution. Notwithstanding the myth of the so-called "death of communism," a myth of which the NPA is itself a by-product, the building of such a Bolshevik party is the task facing revolutionaries today.

Boris Yeltsin addresses counterrevolutionary rabble in Moscow in 1991. Graffiti at base of statue reads, "Lenin butcher of Russia." USec and other fake Trotskyists took their place with Yeltsin on barricades of capitalist counterrevolution.

Corbis

NPA: Suckling at the Teat of the Capitalist State

To give guarantees to the most rabid anti-communists, the Pabloites promised they would entirely dissolve the LCR and even prohibit anyone in the NPA from forming a faction affiliated to their fake "international," the so-called United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec). We in the LTF were wondering how they would manage to keep drawing the hefty subsidies they receive from the capitalist state, which are calculated largely on the basis of their electoral performance in the last parliamentary elections. In the 2007 elections they were still running as the LCR and their vote totals entitled them to an annual check from the Minister of

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 935 | GCU C-701 | 24 April 2009

Racist Police Terror U.S.A.

Atkins/SF Chronicle

Oakland, January 7: Army of riot cops beat, tear-gassed and shot protesters with rubber bullets as hundreds demonstrated against cop killing of Oscar Grant (inset).

Oscar Grant Executed in Cold Blood, Black Oakland Under Siege

OAKLAND—The coldblooded execution of Oscar Grant III, a young black apprentice grocery butcher and father of a four-year-old girl, by Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) cop Johannes Mehserle in the early morning hours of New Year's Day threw a spotlight on the deadly police terror that is a fact of life for black people in racist America. The video images taken by horrified BART passengers showed Mehserle stand over Grant, methodically draw his Sig Sauer P226 semiautomatic and fire into Grant's back as another cop held him face down with his hands behind his back. At protests after the brutal killing, demonstrators have carried signs reading "We Are All Oscar Grant" (see "Oscar Grant Killed in Cold Blood by BART Cop," *WV* No. 928, 16 January).

The killing of Grant in Oakland, where liberal black Democrat Ron Dellums is mayor, brutally exposes the hoax that the election of a black man, Barack Obama, as U.S. president represents progress toward black equality. Underlining the fallacy of such illusions, in Chicago police killed two black men during a five-day period in March, while the NYPD killed two people in April. Obama's "stimulus package" for the moribund U.S. economy includes plans to spend billions to beef up the police by hiring 100,000 more thugs in blue: any prospect of a decent job is fading fast for millions of laid-off workers and unemployed youth, but the ruling class has plenty of money to pay its hired guns to intimidate and repress the ghetto masses and those who might protest being thrown on capitalism's scrap heap.

"When is this going to stop?" cried a black man outside Grant's memorial. "I'm sick of people acting like we deserve what we get, that because we are black, they can shoot us in the back and get away with it." More than 1,000 people, largely black and Latino, turned out for the memorial on January 7. Later that night, protesters took their justified outrage to the streets of Oakland, where they were met by an army of Oakland cops (OPD) equipped with riot gear, helicopters and an armored vehicle. The cops fired tear gas and rubber bullets at the protesters and arrested more than 100 people. Among those arrested and slapped with felony charges were David Santos, a 16-year-old supporter of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), and JR Valrey, a KPFA programmer and journalist for the *San Francisco Bay View* who was trying to photograph the police violence. Drop all charges against the anti-racist protesters!

Along with the mailed fist of state repression came the velvet glove: the cops' masters, from Dellums to California Attorney General Jerry Brown, stepped in to try to dampen the flames of protest with calls for an investigation of Grant's killing. Behind them in trying to keep the peace was a cabal of black preachers and the newly formed Coalition Against Police Executions (CAPE), which hasn't been heard from since late February. Echoed by the cringing reformist left, CAPE advanced various schemes for police reform while appealing for redress to state agencies and officials, from Dellums and Brown to the Feds.

The Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, intervened in the protests over the killing of Oscar Grant to fight for a class-struggle perspective. A January 12 LBL statement, "Mobilize the Power of the Multiracial Unions in Protest!" (reprinted in *WV* No. 928, 16 January), declared:

> "The hard truth is that there will be no end to police brutality short of the destruction of this entire system of capitalist exploitation and racial oppression. But a massive protest based on the organized muscle of the labor movement would give the cops and their capitalist masters some pause. And it would drive home the point that the interests of the working class are inseparably linked to the defense of the ghettos and barrios, the defense of immigrant rights and the fight for black freedom."

What prevents labor from waging such fights in its own defense and on behalf of all of the oppressed are the suicidal illusions in the possibility of reforming the system that are pushed by the patriotic,

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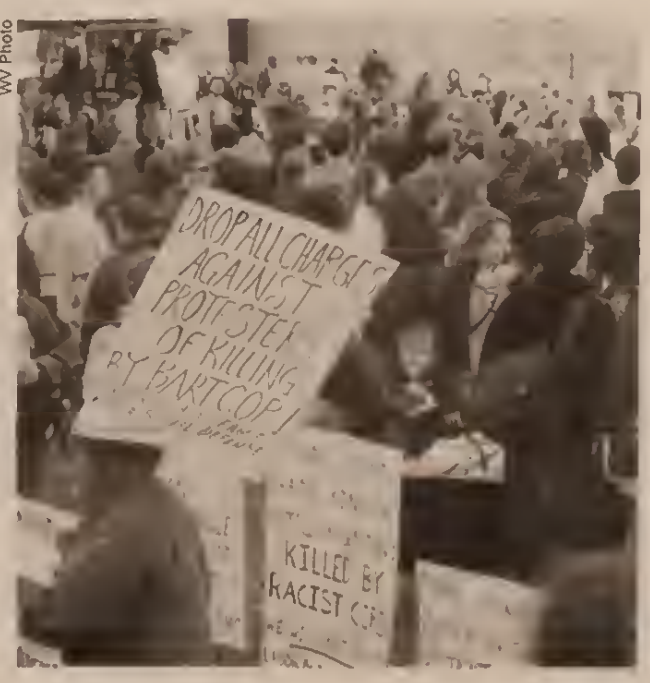
WV Photo



January 14: Spartacist League and Labor Black League for Social Defense at Oakland protest against racist cop terror.

Evolution vs. Political Reaction

25 February 2009

In your "Salute to Charles Darwin" ([*WV* No. 930] 13 February) you hail his theories for "destroying the myths of racial superiority." This is a triumph of oversimplification and wishful thinking. While Darwin was personally against slavery, evolutionary concepts have been used to support eugenics and racist pseudoscience. Darwin's investigations of the natural world intersected with a pre-existing trend in sociology which glorified racial and class supremacy, and condemned the weak, poor, and "inferior" to extinction. This trend was exemplified by Thomas Malthus—incidentally an Anglican parson—and Herbert Spencer, who coined the phrase "survival of the fittest." It reached its nadir with the Nazis. While scientifically invalid, the creation myth had long provided stronger support for egalitarianism: as John Ball, a leader of the English Peasant Revolt asked, "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?"

Niall C.

***WV* replies:**

Normally we would have no reason to respond to a letter that excoriates Darwinism, implicating it in the rise of Hitler's Third Reich, and exalts religious belief. Such assertions would usually be accompanied by a diatribe against "godless communism," "race mixing," homosexuality, sexual promiscuity and abortion (as can be found in some of the tracts produced by the fundamentalist Christian right). Not so with Niall C., who in a previous letter to *WV* (see "Communiqué from Wikiality," *WV* No. 890, 13 April 2007) indicated that he sees himself as a leftist, and who now writes in defense of egalitarianism.

It is troubling that his letter omits more than a few important considerations. For Marxists, it is hardly news that, in societies based on the class exploitation of the many by the few, science has not infrequently been employed to humanity's disservice by those in the ruling strata in their pursuit of continuing and expanding their sway. Among the most grotesque expressions of such disservice were the agonies visited on the populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945. What is lacking in Niall C.'s letter is any appreciation of science's benefits, for example, the planetwide increases in human life spans. The discovery that pathogenic microorganisms are the cause of the common debilitating diseases afflicting mankind has led to an astounding reduction in childhood mortality in the last century. These and other gains are frequently forfeited to the rapacious imperialist order.

On the other hand, the virtues of religious belief are left unspecified—for good reason. With no evidence in reality, there are no merits of such belief other than as a solace for existing misery. In primitive societies, as a hunter or gatherer wholly dependent on an inexplicable, cruel and ever-changing nature, man devised a system of explanations for natural occurrences. Since the onset of class society, religion, while continuing to provide an "explanation" for a natural order that man could not otherwise explain, has primarily served as the handmaiden of the ruling masters, with benefit only insofar as the powers that be sought to effect any sort of progress.

There have been religious types like John Ball, associated with the 14th-century Wat Tyler serf rebellion in England, and Thomas Müntzer, leader of the 16th-century peasant uprising in Germany, who spoke and fought against societal injustice and oppression in the service of all. Both of these were enthusiastically harried, tortured and beheaded (Ball was hanged, drawn and quartered) by those committed to God and king (Martin Luther played a major role in inspiring the mobilization against Müntzer). Indeed, prior to the Enlightenment, virtually all social struggle was posed in religious terms, or as Trotsky put it when referring to Oliver Cromwell and the English Civil War, "under the integument of ecclesiastical disputes" (*Where Is Britain Going?* [1925]). At the same time, one wonders if Niall C. has ever heard of the "curse of Ham"—drawn from the Book of Genesis—a Christian justification for the enslavement of black Africans by Europeans.

For his part, Darwin was a fervent abolitionist well before his trip on the *Beagle* to the Galápagos Islands. His family, composed of Unitarians and enlightened Anglicans, had for generations been abolitionist activists as well as believers in the common descent of all mankind from Adam and Eve. Having shown little interest in medicine (his father's profession), Darwin was sent to Christ's College at Cambridge in the hope he might pursue a clerical career. Niall C., evidently, would be pleased had Darwin's investigations continued along these lines.

Not so Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. As Engels wrote in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880), "Nature works dialectically and not metaphysically.... In this connection Darwin must be named before all others. He dealt the metaphysical conception of Nature the heaviest blow by his proof that all organic beings, plants, animals, and man himself, are the products of a process of evolution going on through millions of years." It was not Cambridge's seminary that led Darwin to this now incontestable finding; it was his travels and further investigations into

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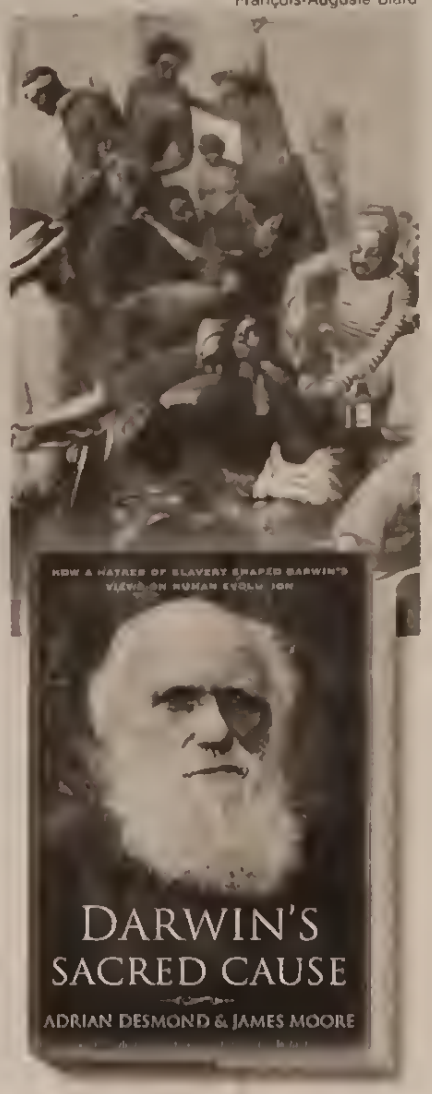
François-Auguste Biard



Top: Slaves being branded before hellish Middle Passage to North American and Caribbean slave plantations. Recently published book links Charles Darwin's abolitionist views to his scientific conviction that all mankind are members of one species.

Lenin on the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie

TROTSKY

LENIN

V. I. Lenin, the leader of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that brought the working class of Russia to power, explained how bourgeois democracy serves as a mask for the capitalist class' bloody dictatorship, enforced by its courts, cops and military forces. At the founding congress of the Third (Communist) International, Lenin presented theses defending Soviet rule against the reformist leaders of the Second International, most of whom had sided with their own bourgeoisies in the imperialist slaughter of World War I.

The bourgeoisie and their agents in the workers' organisations are making desperate attempts to find ideological and political arguments in defence of the rule of the exploiters. Condemnation of dictatorship and defence of democracy are particularly prominent among these arguments....

Firstly, this argument employs the concepts of "democracy in general" and "dictatorship in general," without posing the question of the class concerned. This non-class or above-class presentation, which supposedly is popular, is an outright travesty of the basic tenet of socialism, namely, its theory of class struggle, which socialists who have sided with the bourgeoisie recognise in words but disregard in practice. For in no civilised capitalist country does "democracy in general" exist; all that exists is bourgeois democracy, and it is not a question of "dictatorship in general," but of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, i.e., the proletariat, over its oppressors and exploiters, i.e., the bourgeoisie, in order to overcome the resistance offered by the exploiters in their fight to maintain their domination....

The Paris Commune...showed very clearly the historically conventional nature and limited value of the bourgeois parliamentary system and bourgeois democracy.... It was Marx who best appraised the historical significance of the Commune. In his analysis, he revealed the exploiting nature of bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois parliamentary system under which the oppressed classes enjoy the right to decide once in several years which representative of the propertied classes shall "represent and suppress" (*ver- und zertreten*) the people in parliament....

The significance of the Commune, furthermore, lies in the fact that it endeavoured to crush, to smash to its very foundations, the bourgeois state apparatus, the bureaucratic, judicial, military and police machine, and to replace it by a self-governing, mass workers' organisation in which there was no division between legislative and executive power.

—V. I. Lenin, "Theses and Report on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (March 1919)

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The closing date for news in this issue is April 21.

No. 935 **24 April 2009**

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program

International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Adopted in 1998 at the Third International Conference of the ICL, the ICL's Declaration of Principles is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist international which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution.

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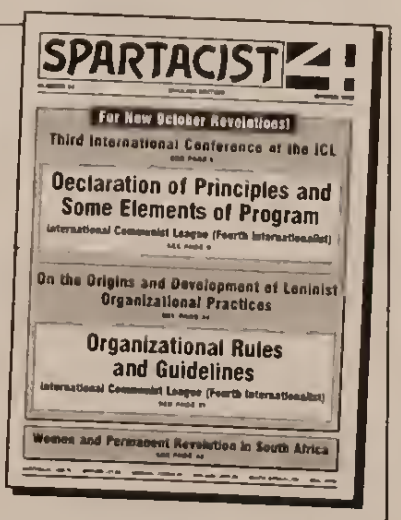

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For Trade Union Protest Against State Repression!

Britain: Cop Rampage at G20 Protest Killed Ian Tomlinson

We print below an April 10 protest statement by the Spartacist League/Britain.

The cops were out for blood at the G20 protests last week in London, and they got it. Weeks of press articles ominously predicting widespread destruction and violence by G20 protesters set the stage for an enormous cop presence which then terrorised the protesters, cracking heads and corralling or "kettling" thousands in a virtual mass detention for hours. Ian Tomlinson died at the hands of the cops in the City of London on 1 April. A video clip posted on the *Guardian* Web site (7 April) shows Tomlinson, a 47-year-old who lived in the area, walking home from work through the City and getting caught up in the police corral. The video shows him being clubbed with a baton from behind by a cop wearing a balaclava [ski mask]. Seconds later, the cop violently pushes Tomlinson to the ground. Minutes later he was dead.

Even before the video came to light, a growing body of witness statements showed the cops' story to be a tissue of lies: that Tomlinson simply dropped dead of a heart attack, unprovoked; that protesters intentionally blocked the police medics' access to Tomlinson and hurled "missiles" at them. In fact, witnesses told how protesters who were trying to help Tomlinson were pushed away by the cops. Witness statements printed in the *Guardian* (8 April) indicate that Tomlinson was attacked twice, "both times from behind and as he was walking away." Press photographer Anna Branthwaite gave a detailed statement of one of the assaults, in which she saw a riot cop grab Tomlinson: "It was a very forceful knocking-down from behind. The officer hit him twice with a baton when he was lying on the floor." She continues, "It became an assault. And then the officer picked him up from the back, continued to walk or charge with him, and threw him. He was running and stumbling. He didn't turn and confront the officer or anything like that."

AP

Jasper Jackson

Left: London cops attack demonstrators at G20 protest, April 1. Right: Ian Tomlinson, walking home from work, just before lethal beating by police.

This is of a piece with the cops' conduct throughout the protests; the 3 April *Guardian* quotes protester Ashley Parsons describing the police conduct at the "climate camp" protest in Bishopsgate as "sickening and terrifying":"Without warning, from around midnight, the police repeatedly and violently surged forwards in full riot gear, occasionally rampaging through the protest line and deliberately destroying protesters' property, some officers openly screaming in pumped-up rage." An investigation into Tomlinson's death is underway by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), but recall the 2005 police killing of Jean Charles de Menezes: pointblank execution on the London Tube [subway] in the name of the "war on terror" followed by a blizzard of lies from the Met [London police] about the innocent Brazilian electrician's "terrorist" behaviour. The jury at the de Menezes inquest last year were instructed *not* to return a verdict of unlawful killing, the police white spirit [paint thinner], are being held in detention until their trial on May 5. Days after a man's death at the hands of the police during the London G20 protest, dozens of demonstrators were injured, some severely, during the brutal state attack on the anti-NATO protests. Over 300 demonstrators were arrested. French president [Nicolas] Sarkozy demanded that protesters be "punished with the most extreme severity." In the weeks to come there will doubtless be further arrests. The KfsV and CDDS declare: *Down with the outrageous sentences against anti-NATO protesters! Drop all charges immediately! Free all anti-NATO protesters!*

In France as well as in Germany, the capitalist state, in the lead-up to the summit, pulled out all the stops in order to prevent mass participation in the protests: a menacing police deployment was mobilized; a witchhunt campaign against anarchists was carried out; the participation of known leftist activists was prevented by promulgating police registration requirements; the legal emergency team in Offenburg [Germany] was spied on; in the days before the protests, travel bans were imposed on 3,000 people at the border; Strasbourg was in effect turned into a militarily occupied zone; and so on. The police terror and the sentences and trials now following it represent a continuation of the state campaign, which aims to criminalize and suppress every protest against the crimes of the capitalist rulers of Germany, France, the U.S., etc.

Today it targets courageous leftists who demonstrate against the imperialist NATO war alliance, an alliance with which the imperialists seek to bloodily impose their interests worldwide. Tomorrow it will target those who defy the capitalists' interests at home, such as trade unionists striking against layoffs and wage cuts, or minorities and immigrants fighting racist discrimination. *The workers movement must protest the brutal attacks on the anti-NATO demonstrators and the current outrageous sentences!*■

continued on page 9

Free All Anti-NATO Protesters! Drop All Charges!

We print below an April 8 joint protest statement by the Komitee für soziale Verteidigung and the Comité de Défense Sociale, which are fraternally allied with the Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S. The KfsV and CDDS are class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organizations associated with the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany and the Ligue Trotskyste de France, sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The fraternally allied Komitee für soziale Verteidigung (KfsV) and the Comité de Défense Sociale (CDDS) strongly protest against the first series of sentences handed down to demonstrators against the NATO summit. In summary hearings reminiscent of police-state dictatorships and in violation of their most elementary rights, six young French and German people received sentences ranging from six-month suspended sentences to six-month prison terms with banned entry into France. Further, three French youths, who were arrested outside a supermarket for buying

Young Spartacus

NYC: Defend New School Protesters! Drop All Charges!

The following statement was distributed by the Spartacus Youth Club at a rally against police brutality at the New School on April 16 protesting the arrests on April 10. Reportedly, three protesters were also arrested at the April 16 rally. We call to drop all the charges now!

The Spartacus Youth Club denounces the NYPD's vicious repression against protesters at the New School on Friday, April 10. Protesters calling for the immediate resignation of the New School President Bob Kerrey and Executive Vice President James Murtha had occupied the school's 65 Fifth Avenue building. The NYPD brutally attacked protesters, some with pepper spray. At least twenty have been arrested and charged with bogus misdemeanors and felonies including criminal mischief. Outrageous among the charges are resisting arrest and possession of burglar's tools—typical frame-up charges used to portray protesters as criminals. Drop all the charges now!

This SWAT-style attack on these students and youth was an unmistakable act of intimidation to deter any form of protest against the administration. It was carried out at the behest of the infamous war criminal and former Democratic Senator Bob Kerrey, who oversaw the ruthless murder of 21 civilians—mostly women and children—in Thanh Phong, during the Vietnam War in 1969.

We demand that all charges be dropped immediately and that no further actions, including suspensions and expulsions, be taken against the protesters or any of those connected to the occupation! Release those still imprisoned, now!■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

BAY AREA

Thursday, April 30, 6:30 p.m.
The Trotskyists' Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution
San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room: Rosa Parks F

Thursday, May 7, 6:30 p.m.
We Need a Workers Party that Fights for Socialist Revolution! Break with the Democrats and Greens!
San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Room: Rosa Parks E
Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, May 6, 6 p.m.
The Russian Revolution of 1917
UCLA, Bunche Hall
Room 1221A
Information and readings (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

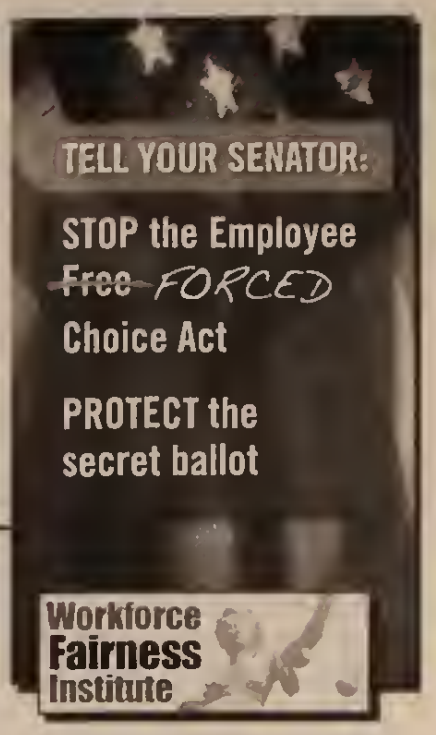
NEW YORK CITY

Wednesday, April 29, 7:45 p.m.
Marxism and Science:
A Tribute to Darwin and the 150th Anniversary of *On the Origin of Species*
Hunter College
West Building, Room 407
Information and readings. (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

The IG and National Association of Manufacturers Oppose the EFCA

Internationalist Group (above) gives pseudo-Marxist cover to big business' opposition to EFCA (right).



When the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) was introduced again in Congress on March 10, it immediately set off a renewed and widespread backlash from the heads of industry and commerce. For the bosses, the EFCA is anathema because it would ease the rules for government certification of newly organized unions. In an article titled "Playing the Labor Card—Business Looks for Ways to Block 'Card Check' Bill," the *Journal of Commerce* (30 March) wrote that the EFCA "has triggered an urgent and widespread response from just about every imaginable business group—manufacturers, retailers, transportation providers and others—to erect political roadblocks to a measure they fear could bring lasting changes as important as anything happening in the trading economy." "Stop the Employee 'Forced' Choice Act!" has become the rallying cry of union-busting employer associations that have pooled hundreds of millions of dollars for their anti-EFCA crusade. On the other side, the AFL-CIO and Change to Win union federations are waging a major campaign for the EFCA's passage. The battle over the EFCA has become a referendum on unionization.

We have a side. Our article, "Why Marxists Support the EFCA" (*WV* No. 929, 30 January), drew a balance sheet of the proposed legislation:

> "Even though it contains an arbitration clause that we oppose, we support the EFCA, as it allows workers to organize and form unions through a streamlined card-check system [majority signing of union authorization cards], bypassing the prolonged balloting process."

At the same time, we have emphasized that the EFCA would not be a panacea for labor. The success or failure of any unionization campaign will ultimately be determined by *class struggle*. As we wrote: "To the extent that the EFCA affords the possibility of strengthening the working class by organizing unions, workers should make use of it. But at the same time workers must beware the EFCA's pitfalls and not rely on it or the capitalist state, which exists to defend the rule and profits of the capitalist class."

IG Opposes the EFCA

In a couple of recent articles on its Web site, including one titled, "Why Marxists Oppose All Government Intervention in the Unions" (23 February), the centrist Internationalist Group (IG) has made clear its opposition to the EFCA, denouncing our position with typical IG bombast. Yet nowhere in these recent articles does the IG mention that the Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Manufacturers and almost every major employer association likewise oppose the EFCA.

What really comes through is the IG's utter disdain for the prospect of increased unionization. In an article on the Obama presidency (23 February) that also touches on the EFCA, the IG blithely dismisses card-check union recognition with the observation, "Canada has a card check law and only 17 percent of the private sector workforce is unionized (as opposed to 7.5 percent in the U.S.)." It takes some chutzpah to sneer at "only" more than doubling union membership! There is no guarantee that the EFCA will pass in its current form or that its passage would result in similar numbers in the U.S., which would amount to *10 million* new union workers, but a streamlined "card check" would certainly facilitate union organizing.

Would the IG admit that this might have something to do with why the bosses oppose the EFCA? Employers have a whole "union avoidance" industry, spending $4 billion annually to break up union organizing drives. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the difference in wages and benefits between unionized and non-unionized production workers is $8.41 per hour. This means that maintaining non-union production labor puts an additional *$17,500 per worker* into the pockets of the exploiters on a yearly basis. For the capitalists, ten million newly organized workers pose the threat of at least *$175 billion* in reduced annual profits.

Trying to give its opposition to the EFCA a veneer of orthodoxy, the IG claims we are repudiating our historic opposition to government labor boards and implies that we reject our article "California Farm Labor Bill Threatens Right to Strike" (*WV* No. 128, 8 October 1976). To the contrary, we stand on what we wrote then:

> "In short, we oppose all government laws regulating union representation. Only essentially negative laws eliminating legal penalties and obstacles to unionization—for instance, the Norris-La Guardia Act—can be supported. Even then, communists must warn the workers not to place any trust in the bosses' government."

The EFCA, with its key "card-check" provision, is just that kind of supportable legislation, effectively eliminating a major union-busting restriction on labor organizing.

Currently, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) oversees a two-step union certification process: card signing followed by elections. Certification elections are commonly drawn out for months or even years (including when Democrats sit on the labor boards), giving the bosses time to intimidate or fire pro-union workers. In its present form, the EFCA would give workers the option of foregoing the second step, *making it easier to win NLRB certification*. Precisely because of this, with Bush no longer around to blame for the failure to push through the bill, one Democratic "friend of labor" after another has over the last few weeks vacated their "support" for the EFCA as currently written. Politicians like Senators Dianne Feinstein and Tom Harkin are looking to "amend" the EFCA by undermining the card-check provision, thus threatening to gut the proposed legislation.

IG vs. the Trotskyists on the Wagner Act

The IG opens its polemic against us with the claim that the Trotskyists opposed the 1935 Wagner Act. The IG then conflates the creation of an entire corpus of labor law—i.e., the Wagner Act and its NLRB—with the proposed EFCA amendment, arguing that it "slightly modifies but maintains" mechanisms of government control. By its criteria, the IG would also oppose legislation eliminating California's "three strikes" law if it did not also eliminate the entire state penal code!

In falsely equating the EFCA with the Wagner Act, the IG distorts the Trotskyists' historical record as well. In our article in support of the EFCA, we qualified the statement from our 1976 *WV* article that "Trotskyists opposed the Wagner Act as a threat to labor's ability to strike." We noted in our recent article, "In fact, as far as we know, the Trotskyists neither explicitly supported nor opposed the Wagner Act." This brings howls of protest from the IG. But for all its protestations to the contrary, the IG cites no Trotskyist writings on the Wagner Act that contradict the position expressed in the authoritative article by John West (James Burnham) in the October 1935 *New International*, which we quoted in *WV*: "Take anything it offers, but never depend on it; depend only on independent class activity."

The 1935 *New Militant* articles cited by the IG, written before and after passage of the Wagner bill, are both scathingly critical but do not, in fact, explicitly oppose the bill. Their central thrust was to dispel illusions in this legislation that was touted by AFL leaders as a "Magna Carta" for labor. The latter article warned that the newly created NLRB and other such agencies are concerned only with "preventing strikes or if they break out somehow, 'settling' them" and are thus "in effect strike-breaking agencies even under the best conditions." At the same time, the article also noted that the bill's passage may create the impression that unionization had government support and thus "stimulate organizing campaigns and strikes." Indeed, as the Trotskyists predicted, bloody strike battles and union organizing drives increased in the years following passage of the Wagner Act—something the IG fails to mention.

The IG does find historical cothinkers in the Stalinist Communist Party (CP), positively citing a passage opposing the Wagner Act from a 1935 article in the CP's *Daily Worker*, written as the CP was coming out of its ultraleft "Third Period"—before swinging sharply to the right, including by supporting the Democratic administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. As if writing against the IG today, Burnham concluded his 1935 *New International* article: "The passing of the Wagner Bill was neither a victory for labor, as [AFL head William] Green hails it, nor a defeat, as the *Daily Worker* insists. Its significance depends on what is done with it. Properly utilized it can play its part in a notable advance."

Minnesota Historical Society

Unionists battle strikebreaking cops and deputies during 1934 Trotskyist-led Minneapolis Teamsters strike.

Class Struggle vs. Class Collaboration

Most backers of the EFCA, from the pro-capitalist labor bureaucrats to the reformist left, support the arbitration clause in the bill. This is consistent with their strategy of trying to reform the workings of the capitalist state, especially through the agency of the Democratic Party. Instead of fighting at the point of production, they plead hat in hand before Obama

and Congressional Democrats. Under the EFCA as it is currently proposed, if a newly certified union hasn't reached a contract settlement after 90 days of negotiations, the process leading to arbitration could be invoked by either the union or the employer. This would then be followed by at least 30 days of mediation. If no contract is reached by that point, then a government arbitrator would dictate the initial—and only the initial—contract, lasting two years.

The labor skates atop the union federations, with the fake socialists in tow, push the EFCA not as an *aid* in the struggle to organize the unorganized but as a *substitute* for that struggle. It was the labor tops who wrote the arbitration clause into the EFCA as a means to "guarantee" a first contract without having to engage in struggle. In fact, workers should not be lulled into thinking that the bosses would not use every means at their disposal against newly organized unions.

The IG falsely claims that union organizing under the EFCA would necessarily result in binding arbitration. That outcome is certainly preferred by the trade-union bureaucrats. But arbitration is not the only course available. As we pointed out in our earlier article on the EFCA, "While the purpose of such a provision is to curtail class struggle, there are no legal prohibitions in the EFCA to prevent strike action during this four-month period." The IG simply accepts that the political strategy of the pro-capitalist labor tops will always prevail within the unions.

In grasping for arguments against our observation that strike action is possible, the IG brandishes spurious "legal precedent" they claim would turn the EFCA into a "no-strike" law. Sounding like company lawyers, the IG legal eagles cite a 1974 Supreme Court decision involving a contractual arbitration clause and then apply it to newly organized unions that haven't even negotiated a contract! It is testament to the complete political bankruptcy of the IG that a group that claims to be Marxist cites "legal precedent" against class struggle. For our part, we stand by what we wrote in "Bosses' Rules—A Losing Game: Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win" (*WV* No. 349, 2 March 1984), when present-day IG leader Jan Norden was editor of *WV*:

> "No decisive gain of labor was ever won in a courtroom or by an act of Congress. Everything the workers movement has won of value has been achieved by mobilizing the ranks of labor in hard-fought struggle, on the picket lines, in plant occupations....
>
> "The entire history of the American labor movement is one long string of laws broken and court injunctions defied. Otherwise there would be no labor movement."

We oppose on principle all government intervention in the labor movement. But short of workers revolution the capitalist government *is* going to intervene in the class struggle on a daily basis. The question is how to resist it and fight to maintain proletarian class independence. Integral to our opposition to capitalist state intervention is our fight against the union tops' class-collaborationist program of reliance on the government, including its labor boards and arbitrators. There is no such thing as an "impartial" arbitrator—the deck is always stacked against the workers.

All government intervention is not the same, however. Those who bring the class enemy's government directly into the union, for whatever reason, undermine the very purpose of unions—to defend the interests of the workers against the employers. It is *always* unprincipled to sue the union and bring the bosses' courts in to decide internal union affairs. Government arbitration of disputes between unions and bosses, on the other hand, does not in every case undermine the integrity of a union.

FIRM

Workers from the Smithfield Foods hog slaughterhouse in Tar Heel, North Carolina, here rallying in 2007 at Smithfield shareholder meeting, won unionization last December after a more than 15-year organizing battle.

The American Trotskyists, whose militants led the pitched battles on the streets of Minneapolis in 1934 that laid the basis for forging the Teamsters as a powerful industrial union, agreed to federal mediation in the July-August strike and subsequent to the union recognition elections filed a request for arbitration to raise the minimum wage rates. One of the leading participants in the Minneapolis strikes, Farrell Dobbs, would later explain in *Teamster Rebellion* (1972) the considerations for doing so:

> "Since union recognition was the paramount issue in the fierce battle with the bosses, we could afford to be somewhat flexible on the wage issue insofar as that might help to win on the main point. Any setback on the wage question arising from this tactical course would be only limited and temporary. Once the union was firmly established on the job, the workers would have a solid foundation for a steady advance in wages and working conditions."

The difference between such forms of arbitration and bringing the bosses' government into the unions is, on a much smaller scale, analogous to the difference between the 1918 Brest-Litovsk treaty between Soviet Russia and German imperialism and a workers party inviting a capitalist government to determine its central committee's makeup. Immediately after the October 1917 Revolution, with World War I still raging and the Russian army disintegrating, German troops were amassed along the front, threatening the very existence of the young workers republic. Bolshevik negotiators at Brest-Litovsk in early 1918 were forced to make huge concessions, including ceding large amounts of territory, in order to secure an onerous treaty to end the war with Germany. In fact, the Brest-Litovsk treaty was the subject of great controversy within the Bolshevik Party, with many leading comrades vehemently opposing it. But in accepting this treaty, the Bolsheviks and the Soviet workers state, however beleaguered, remained intact to fight another day. Leon Trotsky soon forged the Red Army, which eventually triumphed in the ensuing Civil War, including regaining much lost territory.

In terms of the EFCA, the importance of union recognition and an initial contract has not been lost on the bosses. The central reason that employer associations oppose the arbitration clause is that it lets unions get a foot in the door. This calculation is predicated on the current weakness of the labor movement, a result of decades of betrayals by the pro-capitalist labor tops in the face of relentless union-busting attacks and deindustrialization.

In the 1930s, mass labor struggles prompted Roosevelt to enact the Wagner Act that recognized unions and supposedly even the right to strike but sought government "regulation" of the class struggle. In an effort to head off further class explosions and any potential for revolution, Roosevelt even strong-armed recalcitrant capitalists into accepting unionization for the greater capitalist good. Crucial to channeling this tumultuous union upsurge into support for the Democratic Party was the pro-Roosevelt union bureaucracy, along with its Communist Party backers who used their political authority in the unions to provide a left cover for the "New Deal."

The Trotskyists opposed Roosevelt's government and the American capitalist order. Trotskyist leaders in the trade unions took care not to get entangled with government labor boards. The lessons of Minneapolis and other hard-fought union battles were codified by the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party in a 1940 draft resolution on "The Trade Union Movement and the Immediate Tasks of the Party in the Development of Mass Work." It noted:

> "Arbitration of disputes over the interpretation and enforcement of a contract is permissible under certain conditions. However, every effort should be made to avoid this course whenever possible. Certain minor points may, for tactical considerations, be submitted to arbitration in the negotiation of a contract, both with and without strike action being involved....
>
> "A union should not in any case agree to a contract containing a clause providing for the arbitration of the terms of the renewal contract to be negotiated upon its expiration. To do this is to give up the strike weapon, to handcuff the workers.
>
> "Attempts to legislate compulsory arbitration upon the unions must be fought with every ounce of energy which the workers can rally."

IG: Small-Time Opportunists

Applying Marxist principle and historical experience to present-day struggles is alien to the IG, whose nominal principles reside on paper and have little application to its activity in the real world. When the IG's founders defected from the revolutionary Trotskyism of the International Communist League in 1996, they abandoned the struggle to forge proletarian vanguard parties in order to chase after Stalinist washouts, Latin American nationalists and left-talking trade-union bureaucrats. Now, the *Internationalist* lectures that "genuine Marxists (i.e., Trotskyists) oppose any mechanisms of government control of labor." This is laughable coming from the IG. The Brazilian affiliate of these "Marxists" ran an ex-cop for president of a cop-infested public employees union, and then wielded lawsuits to drag the union through the bourgeois courts to hold tight to their union posts (see "IG's Brazil Cover-Up: Dirty Hands, Cynical Lies," *WV* No. 671, 11 July 1997). In Mexico, the IG has blatantly refused to defend the miners union against state intervention, even when the bosses' state deposed the union leader, froze the bank accounts of the union and gunned down and jailed striking miners a couple of years ago. According to the IG, that union and others affiliated to the former ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party, which ran Mexico for some seven decades, are not workers organizations but the "class enemy" (*El Internacionalista/Edición México* No. 1, May 2001). The IG's class betrayal is an expression of its affinity for the more "progressive" bureaucrats in the unions affiliated with the bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (see "Miners, Steel Workers Strikes Shake Mexico," *WV* No. 872, 9 June 2006).

The IG's opportunism takes full flower in its own backyard. The *Internationalist* blows hot air about trade-union independence while in practice the IG alibis the chauvinist, class-collaborationist labor tops to further its own petty maneuvering in the unions. In three lengthy articles enthusing over the West Coast port shutdown in opposition to the war in Iraq last May Day, the IG obscures the role of the grotesque patriotism of the International tops of the ILWU longshore union, as well as the criminal subordination of the work action to pro-Democratic Party pressure politics and the disappearing of any opposition to the war in Afghanistan, which is now Obama's war. More recently, the IG has taken a prominent role in CUNY Contingents Unite, a class-collaborationist formation in the New York City PSC teachers union that has issued a fact sheet on budget cuts at city and state universities, encouraging people to contact the Democratic-controlled New York State legislature and city council (see "For Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All!" *WV* No. 934, 10 April). Now, the IG has joined with the bosses in opposing the EFCA. *Cui bono* (who benefits)? The IG doesn't care. ■

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The Capitalist State and the Renegade "Bolshevik Tendency"

On "Jail Killer Cops"

The police execution of Oscar Grant was a chilling illumination of the savage violence, racism and terror of the capitalist state and its armed thugs. But this wasn't the message of the misnamed "Bolshevik Tendency" (BT). On the contrary, the BT's only response was devoted to excoriating the Spartacist League for exposing the illusions in the "democracy" of the capitalist state, such as are put forward by reformists like the Party for Socialism and Liberation and its ANSWER Coalition. Such illusions are what lie behind the call to "jail killer cops," a slogan raised by ANSWER at the Oakland protests against the cop killing of Grant. In a 29 January article on its Web site, "Polemic with the Spartacist League—On Jailing Killer Cops," the BT takes umbrage at our statement:

> "The capitalist rulers are hardly going to jail their own police guard dogs. And, even if one cop were charged and imprisoned, it wouldn't stop police brutality and terror. The cops serve, together with the military and the prisons, as the core of a state whose purpose is the repression of the working class and oppressed by any means necessary."
>
> —"Oscar Grant Killed in Cold Blood by BART Cop," *WV* No. 928, 16 January

After a perfunctory nod to our Marxist understanding of the state, the BT goes on to opine that "advocacy of a revolutionary solution to social oppression does not, however, mean that Marxists are not also prepared to advance certain concrete, usually negative, demands on bourgeois authority." But it is a far cry from a "negative" demand, such as opposition to particular oppressive or reactionary laws, to call on the capitalist state to jail *its own* killer cops.

The Bolsheviks didn't call to "Jail the Killer Freikorps" when Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were murdered by these reactionary thugs at the behest of the ruling Social Democrats in their bloody onslaught against the 1918-19 German Revolution. Just the opposite. The Bolsheviks honored these fallen revolutionary leaders with searing indictments of the fraud of bourgeois democracy and its Social Democratic bloodhounds. In a speech to a mass demonstration of Moscow workers and Red Army units to protest the murders, Lenin declared: "The example of the German revolution proves that 'democracy' is only a camouflage for bourgeois robbery and the most savage violence."

In contrast, the BT's cry to "jail the killer cops" borrows from the social-democratic lie that this state can be made accountable to the "will of the people." The BT says so itself, writing, "whenever a few cops can be held accountable for a few of their crimes it is a small victory for their victims." In reality, even on those rare occasions where the rulers find it necessary to punish one of their murderous gendarmes, the purpose is to refurbish illusions in the state as some kind of "neutral" arbiter. Such occasional "democratic" facelifts are in turn designed to bolster the effectiveness of the state's armed forces against the working class, black people and any and all perceived enemies of the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Indymedia

PSL's ANSWER Coalition banner at January 30 bail hearing for Bay Area Rapid Transit cop who gunned down Oscar Grant.

Cops, Crime and the BT

Following the killing of Oscar Grant, the BT resurrected its "Cops, Crime & Capitalism" article, which was written in the aftermath of the 1992 multiracial explosion of protest against the acquittal of the racist L.A. cops who mercilessly beat Rodney King. At the time, the BT was peddling its wares to the "police reform" liberals in Berkeley "Copwatch." Echoing Copwatch's "nonviolence" credo that "all cops are not into police brutality," the BT added: "The police occasionally do useful things, of course, such as directing traffic, comforting children and even risking their lives to rescue victims of disasters." They even went on to provide an alibi for the racism and brutality of the police, arguing that this is the product of "their function of controlling people who live in brutally dehumanizing conditions on the margins of society"—i.e., ghettos. Indeed a goodly portion of "Cops, Crime & Capitalism" is devoted not to rampant cop terror but to "crime"—the code word for whipping up racist reaction and getting more cops on the streets—even providing an Interpol readout from the time of statistics for murders, rapes and robberies in the U.S.!

Today, the BT's "anti-crime" fearmongering is a not-so-distant echo of the fear and loathing of the ghetto masses on the part of Oakland mayor Ron Dellums and other black elected officials, who rail against "black-on-black" crime and pour more cops into the streets. Indifference to the brutal reality of black oppression in the U.S. has long defined the BT. In May 1985, when Philadelphia cops—at the behest of black Democratic mayor Wilson Goode in collusion with the FBI—bombed the MOVE household, incinerating eleven black men, women and children and burning down an entire black neighborhood, the BT couldn't even choke out its cringing call to "jail the killer cops." In fact, the BT didn't protest at all! Instead, in the very first issue of their paper *1917* the BT took the occasion of this racist atrocity to sneer at the Spartacist League for only "denouncing the authors of the hideous massacre" rather than politically attacking the victims at a 1985 New York City memorial meeting we organized in solidarity with MOVE.

In its January 29 polemic against us, the BT argues, "If calling for jailing killer cops only creates illusions in the capitalist state, one might imagine that this would also be true of demands for freeing Mumia Abu-Jamal or abolishing the racist death penalty." The BT's cynicism reflects its appetite to swim in the same stream as those who call for a "new trial" for Mumia. That call and the demand to "jail the killer cops" are both born of the same illusions in the inherent "justice" of the capitalist rulers. Our fight to free Mumia is based not on appeals for "justice" from the capitalist state, but on mobilizing the social power of the multiracial working class *in opposition to* the capitalist state. The demand to abolish the racist death penalty is likewise predicated not on faith in this state but in principled opposition to any state being accorded the right to determine who lives and who dies.

The BT's "On Jailing Killer Cops" points to the fact that we have "raised similar demands in the past." That is true and we stopped doing so in the early 1990s precisely because we recognized that calling on the state to jail its own armed thugs was a social-democratic repudiation of the Marxist understanding of the state. Now, the BT opines that "the ostentatiously sectarian impulse evident in opposing the call to jail killer cops" is matched by our opposition to running for executive offices of the capitalist state. Indeed, both positions flow from the understanding, codified by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*, that "the executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie." As we wrote in "Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009): "The question of the state is a life-and-death question for a revolutionary workers party. It is the question of revolution." Shattering illusions in the "democracy" of the capitalist state is vital to building a revolutionary vanguard party to fight for the class rule of the proletariat. That is our purpose. The purpose of the BT is otherwise.

As we wrote in "Cops, Crime and the BT" (*WV* No. 569, 12 February 1993), the BT's "'Cops, Crime and Capitalism' is simply their attempt to give a 'proletarian' facelift to liberal 'law and order' reaction." Today it is recycled to "reach out" to those seeking to channel outrage over the killing of Oscar Grant into schemes to whitewash police terror. The BT's accompanying polemic against us for refusing to go along with the lies of the liberals and reformists is simply another ticket for entry into the Bay Area pro-Democratic Party swamp. ■

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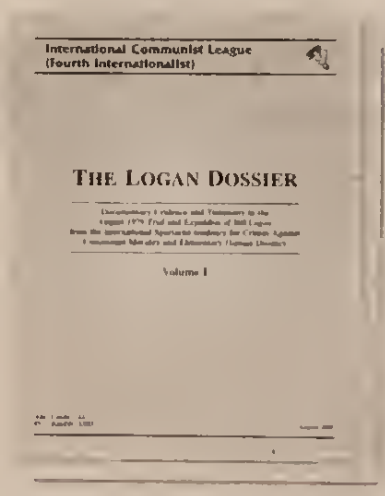

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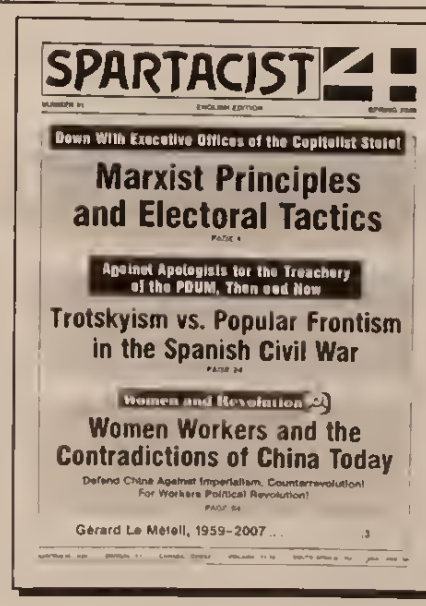


Police Terror...

(continued from page 1)

pro-capitalist union bureaucrats. The labor tops promote such illusions above all by chaining the working class politically to the class enemy through support to the capitalist Democratic Party.

"Reforming" the Repressive Apparatus of the State

The capitalist politicians had scarcely dried their crocodile tears after the cop killing of Grant when four cops were killed in a March 21 shootout in the streets of the East Oakland ghetto. The SWAT team had charged into that deadly confrontation with 26-year-old black parolee Lovelle Mixon, who was also killed. A fifth cop was wounded in the shootout: Pat Gonzales, who in 2007 killed 20-year-old Gary King, shooting him in the back in the street near King's home. In 2008, the trigger-happy Oakland cops gunned down five more young black and Latino men.

Now, from Oakland City Hall to the California governor's office and right on up to the White House, the bourgeois politicians have closed ranks to salute the "heroism" of the police amid cries to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the state. In a chilling and ominous display of police power, reminiscent of Nazi Third Reich Nuremburg rallies, thousands of cops from all over the country marched into Oakland's Oracle Arena for a March 27 memorial. They were joined by California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Democratic Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, liberal black Congresswoman Barbara Lee and other politicians.

The consummately corrupt and brutal Oakland Police Department is being rehabilitated and the memory of Oscar Grant buried under an avalanche of demands for more police patrols, stricter parole guidelines and harsher jail sentences. The capitalist media and the entire spectrum of established black "leaders" are also screaming for more stringent gun control laws to strengthen the state's monopoly of violence. We defend the basic democratic right to bear arms: No to gun control!

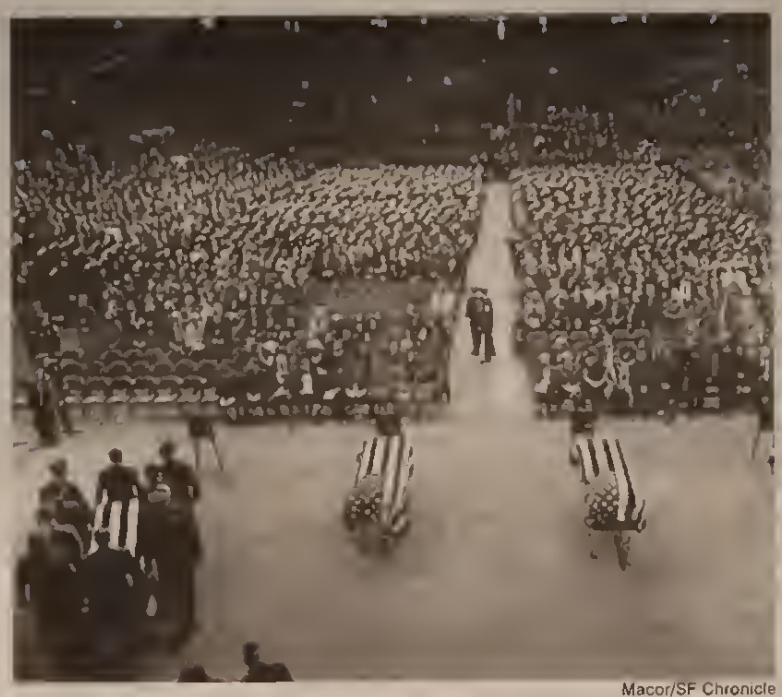
A frenzy is being whipped up on behalf of the cops. A column by retired San Francisco Deputy Police Chief Kevin Mullen in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (29 March) chillingly made clear the rulers' contempt for the ghetto masses: "For sure, fix the parole system and, while you're at it, pour money into the schools and fix the mental-health system as well. But unless the hate and grievance peddlers are stilled, and inner-city attitudes evolve, not much will really change."

According to an AP dispatch, "one of the most affecting tributes" at the pro-cop media event came from Captain Edward Tracey, commander of the SWAT team. "These were my men," Tracey said. "They died doing what they loved: riding in motorcycles, kicking in doors, serving in SWAT." In his condolences, President Obama added, "Their loss reminds us that the work to which they dedicated their lives remains undone." So many doors to kick down, so many minority youth to shoot, so little time.

Even amid the outpouring of support for the dead cops, some 500 people came out to the funeral for Lovelle Mixon. Flowers and condolence messages were laid at a memorial site for him, and one text message captured a cry of rage and defiance against the police: "Us: 4—Them: 1." The black-oriented press, talk radio and various blogs testify to the divisions among the black population over the role of the police, with some dreaming of getting the cops "out of the black community," while others imagine ways to make the cops less racist or less violent.

Mehserle, the BART cop who faces murder charges in the killing of Oscar Grant, conveniently got his preliminary hearing date postponed, with his lawyer claiming distress over the death of the four OPD cops. The International Socialist Organization (ISO) bleats that this only reinforces the need to press "for the police to be held accountable in Oscar's death." But Mehserle's arrest, which was promoted by the ISO, the RCP, the Party for Socialism and Liberation and the "By Any Means Necessary" coalition, was only meant to quell protest. The cops aren't going to be held "accountable" for their crimes for the simple reason that their purpose, together with that of the courts and the prisons, is to enforce the rule of the capitalist exploiters through the violent suppression of the working class, blacks and all the oppressed. Even in the increasingly unlikely event that Mehserle is thrown behind bars, the purpose will simply be to give the state's armed thugs a more "democratic" facade (see article, page 6).

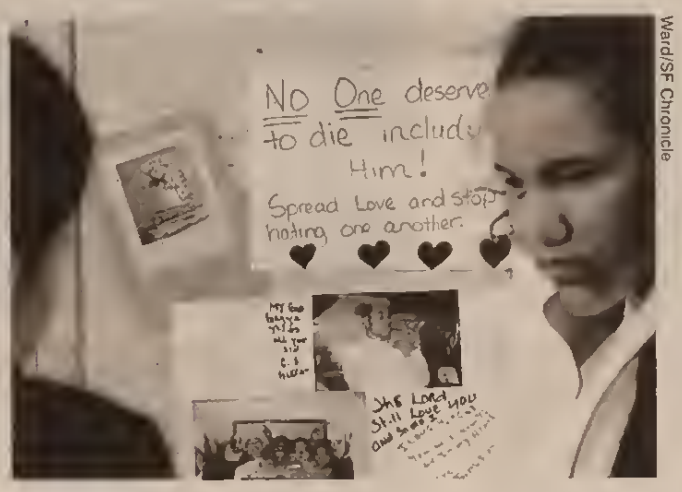
Oakland and the cities surrounding it have served as a virtual laboratory for the liberal schemes advanced by CAPE and the reformist left, such as police "civilian review boards." This con game started some 36 years ago when Berkeley established the first police review board in the country. Of course, that never stopped Berkeley cops from blowing away black people, like grandmother Anita Gay, shot down on her own front porch in February 2008. The Oakland Citizens' Police Review Board (CPRB) was established in 1980 following an OPD killing spree that wiped out nine black people the previous year. One of those killed, Charles Briscoe, was an International Association of Machinists shop steward at the Alameda Naval Air Station, then a major industrial concentration of integrated, unionized workers. Five hundred of Briscoe's union brothers and sisters jammed an Oakland City Council meeting, making palpable the potential for mobilizing the social power of the multiracial working class against cop terror. The CPRB was established to head off any such possibility and to whitewash the OPD with the illusion that they can be reformed to serve "the people."



Macor/SF Chronicle

AP

Left: In menacing show of force, thousands of cops packed Oakland's Oracle Arena for March 27 memorial to four cops who died in shootout. Above: Black Democratic mayor Ron Dellums (far right), liberal face of racist police terror, at March 21 press conference.



Ward/SF Chronicle

Condolence messages at memorial site for Lovelle Mixon, who died in March 21 shootout with Oakland cops.

The Class Divide in the Racial Divide

Writing of the young black man who shot the four Oakland cops, an article in the black newspaper the *San Francisco Bay View* (24 March) noted: "Lovelle Mixon was America's worst nightmare: the Black man with nothing to lose." Mixon grew up on the mean streets of the East Oakland ghetto, cast off like countless thousands of black youth in the inner cities of this country whose lives are deemed worthless by America's capitalist rulers.

During World War II, when shipbuilders in the Oakland region desperately needed their labor, untrained and often semiliterate black youth recruited from the rural South were, in a matter of months, taught to read and write and became skilled apprentices. Today, the shipyards are barely a dim memory, and the factories that once thrived in the area were shut down in the 1980s deindustrialization of America. The black ghetto poor who once served as a "reserve army of labor" to be maintained, albeit minimally, are now written off by American capitalism as expendable. Like Lovelle Mixon, the most likely "future" for black inner-city youth is jail or an early death at the hands of the cops, one of their peers or the many diseases of poverty that are rampant.

At a meeting in Oakland of clergy, city leaders and the cops to "create an action plan to address youth violence," an adviser to Dellums decried spending time and effort on "people who are unskilled, uneducated and end up in prison" (*Oakland Tribune*, 25 March). This was echoed in an opinion piece in the 29 March *San Francisco Chronicle* by black liberal Brenda Payton. Speaking of her neighborhood just up the hill from "Oakland's killing fields," Payton contrasts the good people there, with their neighborhood meetings, block parties and Christmas caroling, to the "violence and crime bred from ignorance, family breakdown and lack of opportunity" just blocks away. Another piece, by a former resident of Oakland, now a director of juvenile detention in Washington, D.C., opined: "A leading cause of street violence is the lack of trust between the community and law enforcement. The tension in Oakland since the murder of Oscar Grant had amassed into a powder keg and it ignited. Whether Mixon lit it intentionally we may never know, but it was lit. And now, before it gets even worse, a deliberate, public, sincere healing is needed in Oakland."

Here is the real face of CAPE's appeals for community "healing centers" and police reform, embraced by Dellums and other black elected officials—to rehabilitate the cops as "servants" of the community so that they can more effectively go after the "criminal" black youth in the ghetto. This is the voice of the black petty bourgeoisie, a small but significant layer who were the main beneficiaries of the limited gains of the civil rights movement as well as of the later "war on poverty" programs aimed at pacifying the ghetto upheavals of the mid 1960s. Barack Obama is representative of the layer of petty-bourgeois blacks who got their piece of the action either by administering these programs or by pushing through narrowly opened doors to privileged spheres that were previously barred to black people. Obama's move into the Oval Office was prefigured by decades of big city black mayors, who were put into office precisely to put the lid on social struggles.

A 29 March opinion piece in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, titled "Speak Out Again, Mr. President," appealed to Obama to replay his "More Perfect Union" speech in Oakland in order to bridge "Oakland's racial and social divides." That speech was an effective demonstration of Obama's credentials to become Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, as he used a little bit of truth—acknowledging America's roots in slavery and racial oppression—the better to push the big lie that racism and inequality are just past history. Obama's speech denounced welfare, conciliated racist opposition to affirmative action and condemned black people for "complicity in our condition," echoing the line of Booker T. Washington, who over a century ago told blacks to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps (that is, if they had any).

Writing of the racist killing of a black Howard University student by black cops in 2000 in majority-black Prince George's County, outside Washington, D.C., black journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates nailed the political sensibilities of much of the black middle class: "Just as affluent white people aren't too interested in the plight of poor whites, neither are affluent blacks especially concerned with their brothers in the ghetto—in fact, they may be even more eager to distance themselves from the ghetto than white people are trying to distance themselves from the trailer park" (*Washington Monthly*, June 2001).

But in racist America, even those blacks who have "made it" are still branded by the color of their skin. Mayor Dellums, chief executive officer of Oakland, who has probably done more to expand the OPD than any recent mayor, was barred from speaking at the memorial to the cops. Despised by a police force that hasn't forgotten his association with the Black Panther Party (BPP) many years ago, he sat silent on the podium, humiliated amidst a sea of armed cops, while

continued on page 8

AP

Jet

Left: Drug bust. Right: Democratic Party huckster Al Sharpton marking "crack house" in 1986. Rulers' "war on drugs" is a racist war on blacks, other minorities.

Police Terror...

(continued from page 7)

columnists in the local press ominously intoned that he got what he deserved.

And today the Brenda Paytons, so uneasy at being only one block away from "Oakland's killing fields," could also themselves be one paycheck away from sharing the situation of their less affluent black brothers and sisters. Close to 70 percent of black middle-class households have no net financial assets, and a report by the Pew Research Center states that 45 percent of their children end up "near poor."

Down With the Racist "War on Crime"!

Heightened cop terror has been the handmaiden of a drive for gentrification, particularly in the West Oakland ghetto, which butts up against the downtown area. An "anti-crime" crusade was initiated by the previous Democratic Party mayor, Jerry Brown. Following his mayoral election in 1998, Brown presided over the OPD "Riders," who rampaged through West Oakland, torturing and framing up their victims. The Riders were so notorious that three of them were put on trial, only to be acquitted on all counts. Under Dellums, more cops have been put on the streets with the purpose of making Oakland safe for a new influx of well-heeled petty-bourgeois elements. Once, these people would have been overwhelmingly white; but Oakland now has a significant layer of black professionals, executives and government administrators whose bread and butter depends on keeping the black ghetto masses down.

The upscale black petty bourgeoisie regards "crime" as the scourge of Oakland and wants more cops for their own protection. They see the ghetto masses as "bringing down the community," a sentiment also spread from the church pulpit and too often shared within the black working class. Blaming the black poor for their own oppression is equally the program of Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam, which has long offered to police housing projects in the ghettos. At an Oakland meeting to protest the killing of Oscar Grant, Farrakhan took black protesters to task for marching only against Oakland District Attorney Tom Orloff and not protesting "when day after day we are killing each other."

The desperate conditions of life in the vast ghetto wastelands of America have also produced a reactive glorification of lumpenism, gang warfare and other pathological behavior among inner-city youth. How could it be otherwise? There are no jobs. Parents have been cut off welfare. Whatever social infrastructure existed—schools, hospitals, community centers—was gutted long ago. While slashing any and all known social programs benefiting the ghetto poor, billions have been poured into prisons. In California, one out of every 12 black men in their twenties is behind bars in the state's overflowing prisons—the majority of them snared under the racist "war on drugs." In a society where the rate of joblessness among ex-cons is more than 75 percent and rates of rearrest nearly 45 percent, Lovelle Mixon was a marked man with little future except jail or the morgue.

An elementary demand, part of the Ten-Point Program of the Labor Black League, is for the decriminalization of drugs, which would take the money and thus the crime out of drug dealing. But to really change the systematic demonization and degradation of black youth trapped in ever more hellish conditions requires shattering the entire system of racist American capitalism, in which the subjugation and segregation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of this society is rooted. Only then will it be possible to eliminate the material roots of black oppression through the integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist society based on a collectivized economy, with jobs and quality housing, health care and education for all.

"Community Control of the Police"—A Liberal Hoax

Arguing that the solution to police terror "is not simply removing individual racist police officers," an article in the *San Francisco Bay View* (26 March) opines that the solution is "a police force that comes from within the oppressed community and that is democratically controlled by that community." It points to the "American roots" of this demand in the Ten-Point Program of the Black Panther Party of 40 years ago.

The best of a generation of radical black nationalists, the Black Panther Party was born in Oakland in response to the failure of the liberal-led, pro-Democratic Party civil rights movement to challenge the oppressive conditions of life for blacks in the ghettos when it came North in the mid 1960s. In the late '60s, the BPP heroically organized armed patrols of the Oakland ghetto against cop terror. But while subjectively revolutionary, the Panthers, like other components of the New Left, identified the organized working class with the ossified, racist Cold War trade-union bureaucracy atop the AFL-CIO; dismissing the workers as "bought off," they saw the ghetto poor as the vanguard of revolution. Absent a Marxist program, the Panthers, under the pressure of events, especially state terror, adopted explicitly reformist politics, such as the "breakfast for children" program and the call for community control of the police, which combined liberal illusions in the bourgeois state with dreams of ending black oppression through "control" of ghetto institutions. (For more on the BPP, see *Marxist Bulletin* No. 5 [Revised], September 1978.)

Even if it could be accomplished, black "control" of the inner cities would not put an end to endemic poverty, joblessness, crime, gutted housing and broken-down schools. The liberation of black people in America requires a massive reallocation of wealth and resources, which is possible only with the expropriation of the bloodsucking capitalist class as a whole and the creation of a workers state where production is based on human need, not profit. The capitalist state cannot be taken over and used for this purpose but must be destroyed and replaced with a very different kind of state where those who labor rule. The multiracial working class, including its strategic black component, is the only class with the social power and objective interest to smash the rule of the bourgeoisie and its system of exploitation and vicious racial oppression. To lead this struggle requires a revolutionary workers party built in unwavering opposition to all the state agencies and political parties of the capitalist class enemy and in unwavering commitment to the fight for black freedom as the key to breaking the chains of capitalist wage slavery in America.

EPA

Obama speaking at graduation of police recruits in Columbus, Ohio, March 6. President's "stimulus package" promises billions to hire 100,000 more cops.

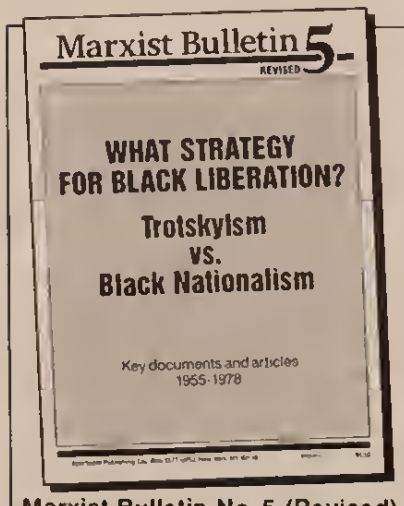
Democratic Party: Graveyard of Labor/Black Struggle

In the late 1960s, the Black Panther Party stood up to the racist violence of the trigger-happy cops, soon bringing down upon them the fury of the capitalist state. Under the impact of murderous repression which took the lives of 38 Panthers, the BPP lurched to the right and split in 1971. The wing led by Huey Newton used the Panthers' authority to build up the Democratic Party's base in Oakland. Bobby Seale ran for Oakland mayor as a Democrat in 1973. Five years later in 1978 the city's first black mayor, Lionel Wilson, took office, putting an end to a half-century of control of Oakland by the right-wing Republican Knowland regime. By 1983, conditions for blacks were worse than ever as unemployment and cop terror mounted. That year, when the Spartacist League ran Martha Phillips as a candidate for Oakland City Council, we wrote: "The city of Oakland is itself the best argument against the Democratic Party."

Not accidentally, Ron Dellums played a key role in husbanding the Panthers into the Democratic Party. He is the embodiment of the Bay Area "progressive" black/labor coalition whose purpose has been to divert working-class and black struggle away from any challenge to capitalist rule. Getting his start as a community organizer during the heyday of the 1960s anti-poverty programs, he served to keep the antiwar movement safe for the capitalists by helping to channel it into Democratic Party electoralism. Elected to Congress in 1970, he actively sought appointment to the House Armed Services Committee, where he worked to repackage the imperialist military as a force for "human rights." Dellums is best known as the force behind the 1986 amendment for divestment from South Africa adopted by the U.S. Congress over Reagan's veto. This piece of legislation was a signal that the U.S. rulers were willing to let their longtime allies, the brutal apartheid government, go down to defeat...so long as what got installed in its place was a regime of black front men (led by the formerly outlawed African National Congress) to oversee the same exploitation of the mainly black working masses for the benefit of the white ruling class and its imperialist big brothers.

In a recent interview on National Public Radio, Dellums was asked what it was like moving from Congress to the local stage. He replied that the local stage was not new to him, "but it is different.... You're the chief executive officer, so it's the executive branch." Unlike parliamentary talk shops such as the U.S. Congress, the executive officers of the government have the job of running the racist capitalist state (see "Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009). Just as Obama is now Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, it is Dellums who commands the racist OPD and slashes the jobs and wages of city workers. In 2007, this supposed "friend of labor" moved against Waste Management sanitation workers fighting a union-busting lockout by threatening to make the city's garbage collection non-union.

Obscenely, Dellums was a keynote speaker at CAPE's January 14 protest against the killing of Oscar Grant. In response to news of the arrest of Mehserle, Dellums declared: "You guys were able to make the system bend to the will of the people." This was CAPE's reward for having organized squads of marshals, including city workers mobilized for this purpose by their union tops, to prevent protesters from "getting out of hand."



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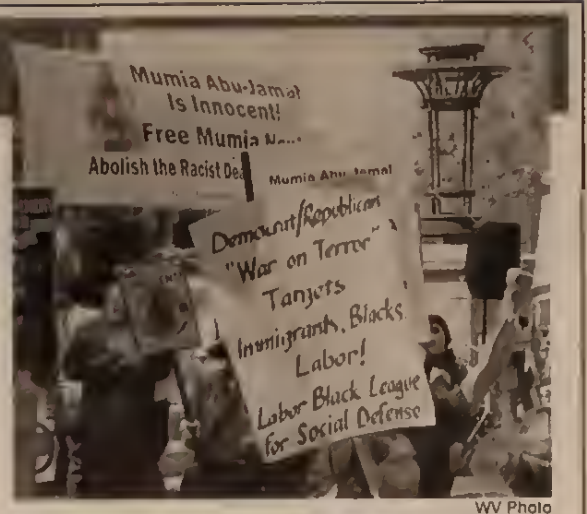
Join the Labor Black Leagues!

The Labor Black Leagues stand for mobilizing the masses of black and working people for militant integrated struggle against the brutal system of racist oppression that is capitalist America.

Initiated by and fraternally allied to the Spartacist League, a multiracial revolutionary Marxist organization, the Labor Black Leagues are part of the revolutionary movement of the workers and the oppressed against the bosses and for socialism.

Since they were brought to this country in chains and enslaved, black people have been an integral part of American class society while at the same time forcibly segregated at the bottom. It took the Civil War to emancipate black people from chattel slavery. But the Civil War was not carried to its completion, and black people were freed from slavery only to be stripped of political rights and economically subjugated. The civil rights movement, tied to pro-Democratic Party pressure politics and sold out by liberal reformism, failed to complete the unfinished business of the Civil War. We fight to win the entire working class, including white workers as well as the growing number of Latino and other immigrants, to the fight for black liberation, strategic to the American revolution. Black and working-class militants must stand for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and in their defense against racist and chauvinist anti-immigrant attacks. An injury to one is an injury to all!

The Labor Black Leagues raise the call: Finish the Civil War! Forward to a workers state! They base their perspectives on the realization that it will take a third American revolution, a workers revolution, to finally liberate black people.



WV Photo

Labor Black League denounces bipartisan "war on terror" at united-front protest for Mumia in Oakland, April 2008.

If You Stand For —

1 Full rights for black people and for everyone else in jobs, housing and schools! Defeat the racist assault on affirmative action! For union-run minority job recruitment and training programs! For union hiring halls! Open up the universities to all—for open admissions, free tuition and a full living stipend for all students. Free, quality, integrated public education for all!

2 A fighting labor movement—picket lines mean don't cross! Defeat police scabherding and strikebreaking through mass pickets and union defense guards! For sit-down strikes against mass layoffs! Fight union-busting; keep the capitalist courts out of the unions! Organize the unorganized, unionize the South! Jobs for all—for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay with full cost-of-living escalator clause! Cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!

3 Fight for women's rights! Defend abortion clinics! Free abortion on demand; free, quality 24-hour childcare! Equal pay for equal work! For free, quality health care for all!

4 Full citizenship rights for all immigrants; everyone who made it into this country has the right to stay and live decently! Stop deportations! No to racist "English only" laws! Down with anti-Latino, anti-Semitic, anti-Arab and anti-Asian bigotry!

5 Defend the separation of church and state! Full democratic rights for homosexuals! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt—cops and courts out of the bedroom! Down with all laws against consensual activities such as "crimes without victims" like pornography, gambling, drugs and prostitution!

6 Mass labor/black/Latino mobilizations drawing on the power of the unions against the racist terrorists. Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!

7 Abolish the racist death penalty! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free all victims of racist capitalist repression! No faith in the capitalist courts! No to gun control! Defend victims of cop terror and racist police frame-up! No illusions in civilian review boards or community control of the police! Down with the racist and anti-labor "war on drugs"! For decriminalization of drugs! For class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense; support the work of the Partisan Defense Committee!

8 Unconditional opposition to every attempt to abolish welfare! Down with slave-labor, union-busting "workfare" schemes! Fight any and every attempt of the government to take away or cut back even more social programs such as Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public health and aid to education and housing! For a massive program of public works—high-quality integrated housing, schools, libraries, hospitals for the working people and the poor!

9 Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! For international working-class solidarity! Support revolutionary struggles of working people abroad! Defend the deformed workers states—Cuba, Vietnam, China and North Korea—against capitalist restoration and imperialist attack! For proletarian political revolution to oust their Stalinist bureaucracies! For labor action against U.S. imperialist war moves and military adventures! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! U.S. troops out of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean!

10 Down with the Democrats and Republicans! For a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all the oppressed! Finish the Civil War! Those who labor must rule! For a workers government to take industry away from its racist, incompetent and corrupt owners! Rebuild America on a socialist planned economy!

— Join the Labor Black Leagues!

Membership pledge: $3/year unemployed; $10/year employed. For more information:

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Labor Black Struggle League
Box 6938, Chicago, IL 60680

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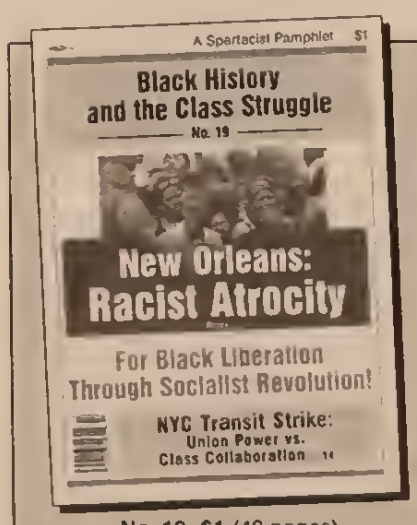
Labor Black League for Social Defense
c/o Box 29574, Los Feliz Station
Los Angeles, CA 90029

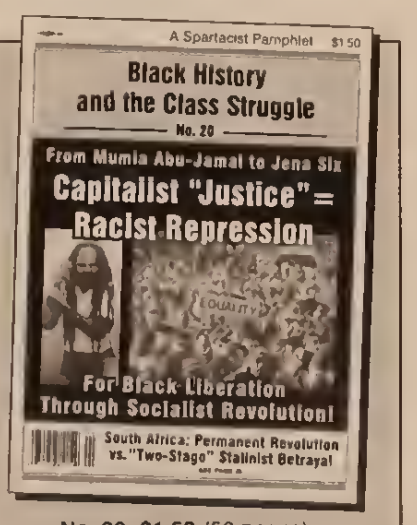
NEW YORK.....(212) 267-1025
Labor Black League for Social Defense
Box 2502, Church St. Station
New York, NY 10008

OAKLAND.....(510) 839-0851
Labor Black League for Social Defense
Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604
lblsdbayarea@sbcglobal.com

Scandalously, CAPE joined Dellums in bad-mouthing the "violent" protesters.

As the Bay Area LBL wrote in its January 12 protest statement: "The mass outrage against cop terror needs an organized political expression, and not one that strengthens the hand of the Democratic Party, the political tool of the very capitalist rulers whose interests the cops 'serve and protect.'" The Bay Area's multiracial unions—longshore, municipal and transit workers—can strike a powerful blow against the racist killers in blue. To shut down the city and port of Oakland for a day would do more for the victims of police brutality than a thousand demonstrations pleading for "accountability." Black workers who are a vital part of the Bay Area unions are an equally vital link to the ghetto masses. But the central obstacle to mobilizing labor's power is the pro-capitalist bureaucrats who chain the unions to the Democratic Party and push the lie that workers and bosses have common "national interests." Far from mobilizing against police terror, they have organized these hired thugs for capitalism into the unions. The SEIU, the same union that organizes BART maintenance workers and Oakland city workers, includes the BART cops! As the LBL Ten-Point Program demands: "*Cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!*"





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The hard truth is that the only way to eliminate police brutality is to do away with the system of racist American capitalism, for which the "gang in blue uniforms" is the front line of defense. A multiracial, revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of all of the oppressed can be forged only in political combat against the misleaders of labor and their leftist outriders. Led by such a party, the victorious workers revolution will shatter the power of the racist rulers and their state. Only then will justice be meted out to Mehserle and his ilk and the basis laid for eradicating all inequalities based on class and race and for using the wealth of this country and all the world for the benefit of those whose labor produced it.■

G20 Protest...

(continued from page 3)

were exonerated, and the clear message was *the cops can kill and they will get away with it*.

The IPCC is no "independent" body committed to establishing the truth. Funded by the Home Office with its chair "appointed by the Crown following recommendation by the Home Secretary" (IPCC.gov.uk), it exists to defuse outrage at cop brutality; to whitewash the police and thereby facilitate their violent, racist business as usual. And it is their business, as millions of workers are being thrown on the scrap heap, to use riot shields, dogs and truncheons when a protest assembles outside the Bank of England. Contrary to the Lahourite drivel of so-called "socialist" organisations who say cops are part of the working class, they are a key component of the capitalist state. The state is no neutral arbiter, it is at its core "armed bodies of men" comprising police, courts, prisons and military that exist to maintain the capitalist system of exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed through parliamentary claptrap, investigations, or moral pleadings; it must be smashed through socialist revolution and replaced with a workers state.

The cops were determined that no "disruption" would mar the perfect obscenity of Obama and [British prime minister Gordon] Brown at the G20 summit plotting how best to shore up their crumbling capitalist economies on the backs of the working people and send more imperialist troops to Afghanistan. State repression such as was meted out in the City of London ultimately targets the working class. And it's the trade-union movement—the organised working class—that must be mobilised in self-defence which means also the defence of all the oppressed, of immigrants, blacks and Asians, Muslims witchhunted under the "war on terror," and of those who protest the barbarism of capitalism. The necessary instrumentality for the uprooting of the capitalist system is a revolutionary party, like the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky which led the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. It is the building of such a party to which the Spartacist League is committed.■

Evolution...

(continued from page 2)

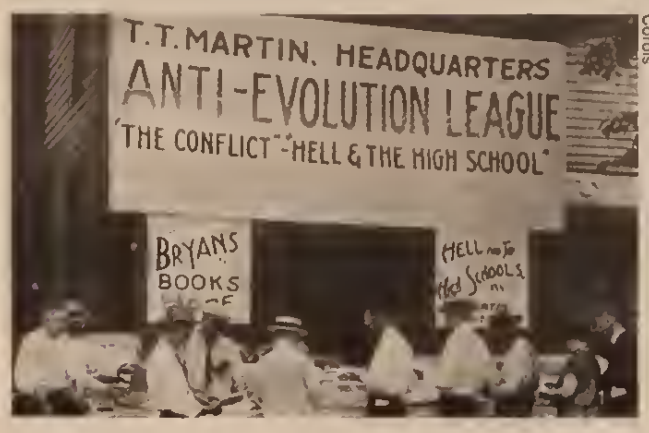
the origin of species. Darwin's theory, which provided a material explanation for natural phenomena, eliminated the necessity for a supernatural explanation for the incredible diversity and complexity of living organisms. Descent with modification, natural selection and a lot of time are all that is needed. I.e., Darwin took God out of evolution and gave a plausible, testable mechanism to explain all varieties of life.

Neither Darwin's anti-slavery fervor nor his revulsion to man's inhumanity to man ever dampened. He was appalled by the treatment of slaves in Brazil, by the extermination of the indigenous tribes in Argentina and by the brutalities visited on the Xhosas in South Africa. In the journals of his travels on the *Beagle*, Darwin wrote with seathing passion:

> "Those who look tenderly at the slave-owner, and with a cold heart at the slave, never seem to put themselves into the position of the latter;—what a cheerless prospect, with not even a hope of change! picture to yourself the chance, ever hanging over you, of your wife and your little children—being torn from you and sold like beasts to the first bidder! And these deeds are done and palliated by men, who profess to love their neighbors as themselves, who believe in God, and pray that his Will be done on earth! It makes one's blood boil, yet heart tremble, to think that we Englishmen and our American descendants, with their boastful cry of liberty, have been and are so guilty."
>
> —Quoted in Adrian Desmond and James Moore, *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How a Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009)

Recently released, *Darwin's Sacred Cause* compellingly argues that Darwin's abolitionist sentiments especially steeled him in his developing scientific conviction that all mankind were members of one species. Although he made a strong argument for this in *The Descent of Man* (1871), the actual molecular basis of heredity was unknown in Darwin's lifetime. The structure of DNA was not discovered until 1953 by Watson and Crick, and the host of technological advances in protein and gene sequencing and anthropological findings that have destroyed the myths of racial superiority have only existed for a few decades. Darwin could not have had such tools—nor did we claim that. In *WV* No. 930, we cited the 1986 *amicus curiae* brief presented by the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee to the Supreme Court against the teaching of the myth of Biblical creation in Louisiana schools. That brief noted that it was "the study of scientific evolution" that provided "material evidence that we are all part of the same human race, definitively destroying the myths of racial superiority."

Darwin would, in all probability, have been surprised by the finding that it was possibly only 50 to 100 thousand years ago that the Adams and Eves of *Homo sapiens sapiens* migrated out of Africa, scant time in which to develop the posited genetic variations claimed by the "social Darwinists" and their modern counterparts, the sociobiologists. Darwin would have much appreciated the evident probability that the progenitor of all life on earth was the cyanobacteria, the first photosynthetic biota that have left fossil evidence going back almost 3.8 billion years. Darwin's theory in no way determined these outcomes; matters have simply turned out that way. (We recognize, of course, that scientific knowledge is dynamic and, unlike religious belief, changeable in the face of evidence.)

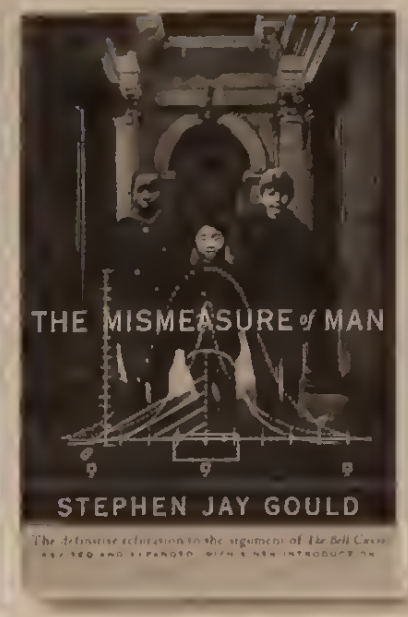


Corbis

Dayton, Tennessee: Evangelists, segregationists mobilized at the time of the 1925 Scopes "monkey trial," the most famous battle between evolutionists and creationists in U.S. history.

As profound as was Darwin's grasp of common descent with modification, his grasp of social reality was at times little better than pedestrian. Quite telling in this regard was Darwin's tendency to see the white "subspecies" (as he then perceived the different supposed races), and more specifically the Victorian gentleman, as the pinnacle of existing civilization (Charles Dickens' view of such types was rather more jaundiced). Darwin was, to some extent, influenced by Thomas Malthus's view that the numerical growth of "subspecies" (Darwin seemed to see the Irish as such a "subspecies") led to competition for insufficient resources (primarily food) and, thus, to the elimination of the unsuccessful. He became willing to consider that the slaughter of colonial peoples in the wars of the expanding European powers, the brutality of which he abhorred, might be the operation of natural selection, the survival of the fittest, within the human species. And although Darwin never attempted to verify these leanings by creating "facts" to support them, others, to his dismay, soon did.

Terrence McCarthy



***The Mismeasure of Man* by the late paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould refuted pseudo-scientific justifications for racism.**

Marx and Engels were also concerned about human civilization, meaning for them, as it no doubt did for Darwin, the social progress of man. For Marx and Engels, this was based not on the struggle between "subspecies" but on the existing social relationships of production. As Engels succinctly put it in his 1883 "Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx":

> "The production of the immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch form the foundation upon which the state institutions, the legal conceptions, art, and even the ideas on religion, of the people concerned have been evolved, and in the light of which they must, therefore, be explained, instead of *vice versa*, as had hitherto been the case."

The soft-wired, plastic and intrinsically social featherless bipeds that constitute mankind are not in the final analysis conditioned by innate talents or instincts, but rather by their social arrangements. Great and seemingly impregnable societies have been overthrown by so-called barbarians to the eventual benefit of human progress. The fall of the Western Roman Empire helped spawn the feudal order in which capitalism, which was to become the most productive society yet known to man, gestated and ascended, rising to world dominance through the agency of revolution and war.

Civilization does not continually advance. Throughout history, human societies have also paused, decayed or moved backward. As we wrote in a prior article, "Hail Charles Darwin!" (*WV* No. 854, 16 September 2005):

> "This motion, its tempo and direction are intrinsically linked to the economy and class struggle. Science is not independent of these processes. At the time of the industrial revolution, when the ascendant bourgeoisie challenged and replaced the feudal order, there was not only tremendous progress in the material results of knowledge (e.g., the steam engine), but also leaps in ideas of human freedom (the Enlightenment). But the French Revolution's philosophy of 'liberty, equality, fraternity' was limited in application to the new ruling bourgeoisie once it had achieved its own fundamental class interest: the abolition of feudal restrictions on private moneymaking through exploitation of the working people. Marx surpassed the radical idealism of the French Revolution, understanding from his analysis that the dominant ideas of every historical period are those of the ruling class. Enlightenment philosophy could find universal material expression only through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of workers rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat as a bridge to communism."

In the aftermath of the capitalist counterrevolutions in East Europe and the USSR, it has become even more commonplace for people to think that their reality can be shaped by what they believe and feel rather than by what they are and what they do. Such idealism has led many to concur with the view of the newly elected president, Barack Obama, that racial oppression is a thing of the past and that unity of purpose and "hope" will right all wrongs. In fact, in the face of this mammoth economic crisis, the race-caste oppression of black people can and will only worsen and the wrongs visited on America's working people will only multiply and deepen, until they are answered by class struggle; and U.S. imperialism will continue to rain death and destruction down on its victims, until it is overthrown through an American workers revolution. We do not know if Niall C.'s belief in the effectiveness of religious-based egalitarianism extends to the realm of economic social reality, nor do we care. As Marx wrote in his 1845 "Theses on Feuerbach," "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it." ■

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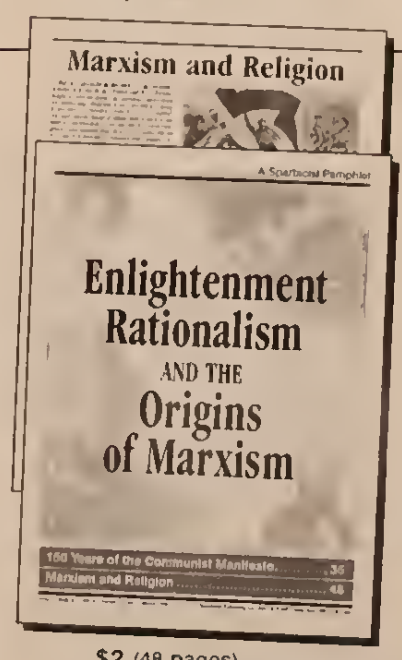

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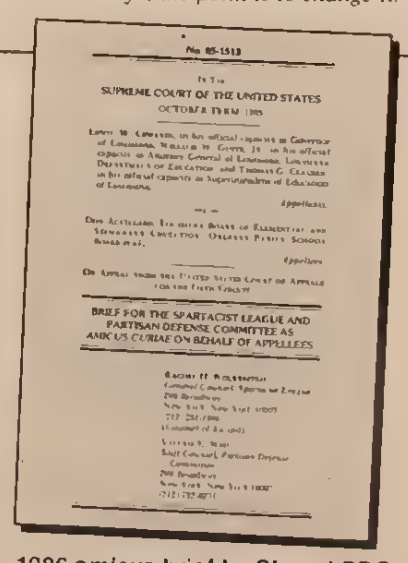

1986 *amicus* brief by SL and PDC opposed teaching of "creation science" in Louisiana public schools.

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Ireland...

(continued from page 12)

IRA, "the armalite and the ballot box," wielding armed struggle along with diplomatic manoeuvres and appeals to the "democratic" pretensions of the imperialists as pressure tactics. In the changed political landscape resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union, which had acted as a counterweight to the imperialist powers, petty-bourgeois nationalist formations no longer have the diplomatic, military and financial means they once had and have been compelled to accept "negotiated solutions": the Oslo Accords in the case of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the Good Friday Agreement in the case of the IRA.

When Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness, former IRA leader who is now deputy first minister in Stormont, stood shoulder to shoulder with Orde and condemned dissident Republicans as "traitors to the island of Ireland," it was aptly described as McGuinness's "Michael Collins moment." Collins led the military struggle against the British and signed the Treaty with Britain that led to the partition of Ireland. Upon taking over the administration of an independent capitalist Ireland in 1922, Collins ruthlessly suppressed the IRA dissidents of the time, executing many of those who continued the struggle against the Treaty and the new Irish "Free State." From Collins to McGuinness to the IRA dissidents of today, Irish nationalism has inevitably proven to be a dead end for the oppressed whose interests it claims to represent.

The partition of Ireland by British imperialism created the Northern Irish state-

AP

Solicitor Pat Finucane, whose best-known client was IRA martyr Bobby Sands, was murdered in 1989 by Loyalists in collusion with state forces.

let as a reactionary move against the consolidation of an Irish bourgeois national state encompassing the entire island. Since then, the Protestant majority dominates over the Irish Catholic minority. However, the Irish nationalist programme —upheld today by Sinn Féin and the dissidents, and previously by the "anti-Treaty" forces that went on to form the Fianna Fail party—calls for reunifying, necessarily by force in the case of the Protestants, the six counties of Northern Ireland with the southern Catholic clericalist Irish bourgeois state. If achieved, this would simply be a reversal of the terms of oppression, leading to communalist slaughter and forced population transfers.

All nationalism has a genocidal logic, which is particularly acute when two different peoples interpenetrate on the same territory as is the case in Northern Ireland. In such situations, there is no democratic solution under capitalism to the contending democratic rights of national self-determination. While opposing all aspects of national oppression of the Catholic minority, we recognise that the conflicting claims can only be equitably resolved within the political framework of proletarian class rule, in which the capitalist drive for divide-and-rule of the working class in the service of profit has been eliminated.

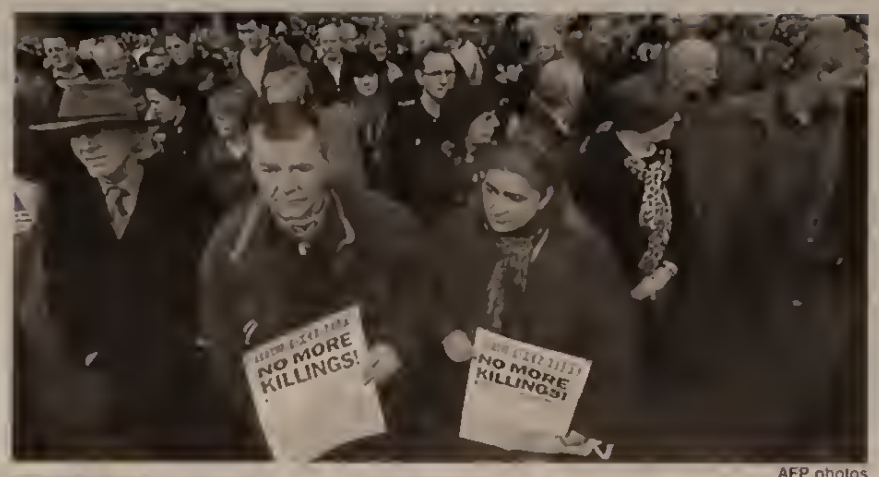
We have consistently called for immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the British troops and we opposed the imperialist "peace" deal. In 1993 we stated: "Any imperialist 'deal' will be bloody and brutal and will *necessarily be at the expense of the oppressed Catholic minority*. And it would not do any good for working-class Protestants either." Our article stated:

> "The essential assumption, explicit or implicit, in all the 'peace' proposals being touted about is that the British Army, with its shoot-to-kill policy, will remain to police capitalist order, backed up by the bloodthirsty Loyalist thugs. The British imperialists played divide and rule in colonies like India and Palestine, and then on their way out sought to wreck these places by whipping up communalism. Today they adopt a racist and arrogant pretence that they are just trying to stop the tit for tat barbarities of the 'uncivilised Irish' of all hues. All of [then-leader of the Catholic SDLP] John Hume's initiatives, including the talks and proposals with Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams, are based on the premise that British imperialism is somehow 'neutral.' All history and the graves of many Irish Catholics say otherwise."
>
> —*Workers Hammer* No. 138, November/December 1993 [reprinted in *WV* No. 589, 3 December 1993]

Socialist Party: Union Jack "Socialists"

While the Taaffeite Socialist Party in England was up to its neck in a reactionary crusade for "British jobs for British workers," its sister group the Socialist Party in Northern Ireland played an equally reactionary role, lining up behind British imperialism and the Orange state in whipping up a chauvinist frenzy against the "terrorism" of the Irish nationalists. On 11 March the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions called a pro-imperialist, anti-"terrorism" rally in which Loyalists, clergy and trade-union bureaucrats united in condemning the Republican attacks on the army and PSNI. The Socialist Party was highly visible and distributed a leaflet titled "No More Killings!" (dated 11 March), which said: "The killings by the Real IRA and the Continuity IRA of two soldiers and a policeman should be roundly condemned by every section of the working class movement," adding that: "The killings in Antrim and Lurgan are a reactionary attempt to divert the attention of workers away from the class issues that bring people together by stirring up sectarian division."

This chauvinist organisation's idea of "bringing people together" is unity under the Union Jack—whether leading chauvinist anti-immigrant strikes in England or pandering to Loyalists in Northern Ireland, such as former paramilitary killer Billy Hutchinson whom they hosted in their meetings in the 1990s. The leaflet said not one word against the British Army, either for its butchery in Iraq and Afghanistan or in Northern Ireland, which is hardly surprising given that the Socialist Party refuses to call for the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland. Rather they view British imperialism as a force for "democracy."



AFP photos

Belfast, March 11: Socialist Party placards, leaflets were prominent at reactionary anti-Republican rally supported by Loyalists, clergy and trade-union bureaucrats. No placards or banners opposed British imperialism or Northern Ireland cops.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) also supported the pro-imperialist, anti-Republican rallies on 11 March. Addressing the Derry rally, the SWP's Eamonn McCann said:

> "It's worth recalling that it was protests by ordinary people that gave the spur for the peace process that ended 30 years of armed conflict between the mainly Catholic Republicans, who want a united Ireland, and Protestant Unionists backed by the British state. Time and time again people took to the streets to push the process forward when establishment politicians were blocking it."
>
> —*Socialist Worker*, 21 March

Indeed the likes of McCann and the trade-union bureaucracy did mobilise the unions in Northern Ireland and peddled massive illusions in the imperialist "peace deal" because, like the Taaffeites, promoting British imperialism as a force for "democracy" is what their programme boils down to. Thus the SWP welcomed the British troops being sent to Ireland by a Labour government in 1969, obscenely declaring that: "The breathing space provided by the presence of British troops is short but vital. Those who call for the immediate withdrawal of the troops before the men behind the barricades can defend themselves are inviting a pogrom which will hit first and hardest at socialists" (*Socialist Worker*, 11 September 1969).

Britain's vaunted parliamentary "democracy" is the velvet glove to disguise the mailed fist of the capitalist state—the army, police, courts and prisons whose purpose is to maintain the rule of capital. The capitalist rulers have long used Northern Ireland as the testing ground for domestic repression in Britain: Irish Catholics were indiscriminately targeted as "terrorist suspects" and subjected to the same treatment as Britain's Muslims today. Shoot-to-kill has been brought to the streets of London as seen in the brutal police execution of Brazilian immigrant Jean Charles de Menezes in July 2005.

The Orange state in Northern Ireland has always been a police state, obsessed with repression against Irish nationalists. From the horse's mouth, this is described by Sean Rayment, a former commander of the Close Observation Platoon (C.O.P.) of the Parachute Regiment—the regiment responsible for the slaying of innocent Catholics on Bloody Sunday—who says that in the 1990s:

> "Around 13,000 soldiers, and an equivalent number of RUC officers, patrolled Ulster's cities, towns and villages, while a bewildering array of covert agencies secretly monitored the IRA. These covert agencies were collectively known as 'The Group' and consisted of the SAS [Special Air Services]; 14 Intelligence Company, a covert organisation which conducted close surveillance of senior IRA members; and the Force Research Unit, which ran a network of IRA informers. The military agencies also worked closely with the Special Branch's SAS-trained E4A teams. The Special Branch also ran their network of informers, as did MI5 which had a sizeable presence in the Province."
>
> —Telegraph.co.uk, 14 March

Little has changed today. The covert forces described above have been replaced by the SRR, a sinister outfit that was involved in the operation that led to the execution of de Menezes and has been active in covert operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Today Britain's MI5 devotes a whopping 15 per cent of its resources to Northern Ireland, against Republicans. The notorious collusion between state forces and the Loyalist killers remains untouched: no police officer will be prosecuted for the murder of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane who was gunned down in his home in 1989 by Loyalists, working with state forces. Such collusion is not some aberration, but *par for the course* for "democratic" imperialism. One year after the Good Friday Agreement was signed Rosemary Nelson, a prominent Catholic lawyer who reported to the UN that she received death threats from the RUC, was murdered by a Loyalist bomb in 1999.

More than a decade after the ballyhoo about the "peace deal" Northern Ireland society is more segregated than it was before the army was sent there four decades ago and is riven by over 40 "peace" walls. Catholics remain oppressed, and the SWP reports that: "Some 60 percent of applicants for social housing in Northern Ireland are Catholic and 40 percent Protestant. Yet 60 percent of allocations go to Protestants and only 40 percent to Catholics" (*Socialist Worker*, 21 March).

The task of revolutionaries is to seek opportunities for a proletarian perspective in Ireland and to transcend the religious divide that has been fostered by the bourgeoisie in its efforts to increase capitalist exploitation. This means mobilising the whole working class—Protestant and Catholic—to fight for an end to discrimination against the oppressed Catholics, in jobs, housing and education. We advance a programme of transitional demands based on what workers need, not what capitalism can afford. We fight for jobs for all; work-sharing on full pay and a sliding scale of wages and hours. In Northern Ireland, as elsewhere, these demands point to the need to transcend the framework of capitalist rule, to break out of the problem of scarcity which inevitably pits workers against each other. A planned economy, organised under working-class rule, exercised through soviets (workers councils), would regenerate the former industrial areas throughout the British Isles that have been turned into an economic wasteland by capitalism. To resolve the centuries-long oppression of Ireland and come to a voluntary arrangement with all, including the Protestant community, our goal is a workers republic in Ireland within a voluntary federation of socialist republics in the British Isles, led by a Leninist party. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

British Troops Out of Northern Ireland Now!

Defend Irish Republicans Against State Repression!

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 206 (Spring 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

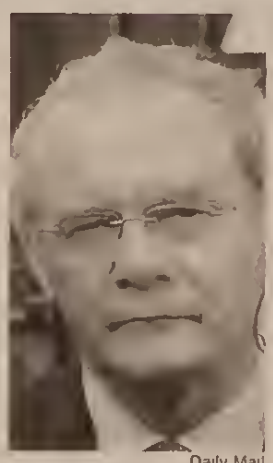
WORKERS HAMMER

The Orange state in Northern Ireland has unleashed a wave of repression against Republicans in the aftermath of the Real IRA's killing in March of two British soldiers in Massereene British Army base in Antrim and the killing of a police officer in Craigavon by the Continuity IRA. These attacks by IRA [Irish Republican Army] dissidents on state forces came in the midst of a public row in which police chief Sir Hugh Orde was forced to admit that the British Army's "Special Reconnaissance Regiment" (SRR) had been deployed to crack down on IRA dissidents.

Even prior to these killings there had been a massive increase in state repression against Republicans, which targets the whole Catholic population: the last quarter of 2008 saw a *245 per cent* increase in the number of people stopped and searched by police. Now the police are conducting sweeping raids and roundups in Catholic areas, which have led to riots in Craigavon and Belfast. A Catholic bar in North Belfast was attacked with a pipe bomb and a Catholic primary school in the same area was daubed with Loyalist graffiti. According to the *Derry Journal* (16 March), Irish nationalist dissidents fear for their lives. One said: "It is only a matter of time before one of us is taken out by the Brits or some branch of their so-called security agencies. It is always a possibility but it seems more likely now." Among those arrested are prominent Republicans Declan and Dominic McGlinchey (Junior) as well as Colin Duffy who has now joined others on hunger strike. *Release the detainees! Down with Orange state repression!*

The killings of two British soldiers and a cop were met with obscenely hypocritical declarations against "terrorism," not least from the British Labour government which is part of the world's biggest force for terrorism as seen in the brutal occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. British imperialism's murderous record in Northern Ireland includes the killing of 13 Catholic demonstrators on Bloody Sunday in 1972 and countless deaths in collusion with the Loyalist death squads.

Obscenely Sinn Féin, which for many years was subject to repression by British armed forces and those of the Orange state, joined the denunciations of the IRA dissidents. Gerry Adams condemned the shootings as an attack on the "peace process." In fact the aftermath of the shootings shows that the *only* significant change brought about by the "peace process" is the disarmament of the IRA—something decades of state repression by the British military failed to do—in exchange for "power sharing" between Sinn Féin and the Democratic Unionists in Stormont, the historic seat of Orange-supremacist government in the province. This imperialist-brokered "peace" deal is premised on the continued oppression of the Catholic minority under the heel of the sectarian Orange state. The *fundamental* nature of that state as created by the British at the time of partition remains unchanged. It is today what it always has been: *a heavily militarised, anti-Catholic, police state*. Although the British Army no longer patrols the streets, having reduced their presence in August 2007, some 5,000 British troops remain there as backup for the heavily armed Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI, the renamed RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary]), while the Loyalist paramilitaries have not disarmed. In May 2007, Sinn Féin agreed that its representatives would sit on the new Policing Board, absurdly claiming that they would ensure "the PSNI are publicly held to account" (*An Phoblacht*, 17 May 2007). Police accountability is a myth also frequently peddled by reformists. In Northern Ireland as elsewhere, the capitalist state is the executive arm of the ruling class and cannot be made accountable to the working class and oppressed. It must be shattered in the course of workers revolution, led by a revolutionary workers party, and replaced with a new state power of the working class. Coming from the petty-bourgeois nationalists of Sinn Féin, the pledge to hold the PSNI "to account" is a whitewash of the anti-Catholic nature of the Orange statelet. To underline the fact that little has changed, when Orde called in the SRR as part of a major crackdown on Irish nationalists, he didn't bother to inform the Policing Board.



Daily Mail

Faith/PA

Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness (left) backed Northern Ireland police chief Sir Hugh Orde (above) as cops carried out raids on Catholic homes in Bellaghy.

Belfast Telegraph

From the point of view of the working class, the killings of these British military personnel and a Northern Ireland cop are not criminal acts. However, in most such terrorist acts, innocent civilians are among those killed or maimed. Among those injured in the shooting were two workers delivering pizza to the army barracks, one of whom was a Polish immigrant. The obscene claim by the Real IRA that both workers were "collaborators" with the British shows the reactionary (and racist) logic of nationalism, which purports to represent its "own" people and writes off all "other" people as the enemy. This outlook frequently leads to acts of indiscriminate violence against the working people.

We stand for the military defence of the Irish nationalist organisations in their conflicts with the British Army, the Northern Ireland state forces and Loyalist paramilitary groups. At the same time, we oppose and condemn communalist attacks by the Irish nationalist forces on the Protestant population as well as indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets in Britain and in Northern Ireland, such as the Omagh bombing in 1998. These indiscriminate actions are indeed crimes against the working class of these islands. Politically our programme is counterposed to the terrorism that is carried out in the service of the nationalist programme which *cuts across* the class unity of the workers in the struggle against their common enemy: the capitalist class.

Our perspective requires the internationalist unity of the working class throughout the British Isles in a struggle against British imperialism, the Irish clericalist state and the Orange state. We fight to eliminate all forms of national oppression, from a proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist perspective. Thus we call for British troops out of Northern Ireland as an integral part of our programme for an Irish workers republic within a federation of workers republics in the British Isles.

The Dead End of Nationalism

Today, disillusionment among Irish nationalists with the disbandment of the IRA in favour of power-sharing in [Northern Ireland Assembly] Stormont is running high. The *Sunday Times* quotes Richard O'Rawe, a former IRA member imprisoned with Bobby Sands (who died on hunger strike in 1981) saying he would "not have joined the IRA in the first place" if he had been told that power-sharing with the Unionists would be the outcome. "Who in their right minds would do a minute in jail for this?" Rawe pointedly asks (*Sunday Times*, 15 March). Such disillusionment has led some hard-line nationalists to seek a solution by trying to re-ignite the military campaign that the IRA abandoned. Prior to the recent shootings, a 300 lb. bomb produced by IRA dissidents supposedly intended for another British Army base was found in Castlewellan, Co. Down in January.

Irish nationalist movements have always combined, in the words of the

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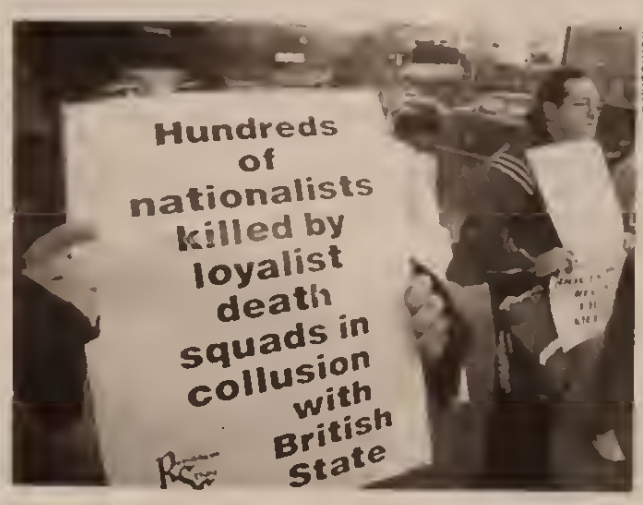

Morrison/AP

Dublin, January 2007: Protest at Sinn Féin conference, which voted to support the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 936 | C-701 | 8 May 2009

Obama and Image Control

U.S. Imperialism: Torture, Repression and War

On April 16, the Justice Department released four declassified Bush administration memos that provide grisly details of what had already been perfectly clear: that torture of detainees by U.S. security forces was planned and approved at the highest levels of Washington. The (heavily redacted) memos, released as a result of a court suit by the American Civil Liberties Union, describe in gory detail the "techniques" that were given official imprimatur. These include depriving prisoners of sleep for up to eleven straight days and shutting them in a dark, cramped box crawling with insects. The memos also give official approval to waterboarding, a favorite torture method of the Spanish Inquisition. Among the victims are two detainees who were waterboarded 266 times.

Liberal pundits and bourgeois media commentators are wringing their hands at the revelations of officially sanctioned torture. President Barack Obama intoned that the U.S. was "losing our moral bearings" and vowed there would be no more torture. After initially saying that none of the torturers would be prosecuted, Obama later stated that it was up to Attorney General Eric Holder to decide whether some of the architects of the torture memos will face any prosecution.

In reality, the U.S. has tortured, is torturing and will continue to torture so long as the U.S. imperialist state exists. Capitalist society was, as Karl Marx eloquently described in *Capital*, born "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt." Modern imperialism continues the brutal practices of mass murder, torture and humiliation that accompany the exploitation of labor and the ceaseless struggle between competing imperialist forces to dominate the world.

U.S. Army

AP

Above: U.S. military base at Bagram, Afghanistan, where hundreds are imprisoned. Below: U.S. prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. While Obama promises to close Guantánamo prison, he is continuing "war on terror," doubling size of Bagram prison and maintaining indefinite detentions.

U.S. imperialism marked its entrance on the world scene with the Spanish-American War of 1898 and the bloody suppression of a nationalist uprising in the Philippines, during which a U.S. general famously ordered his men to "kill everyone over the age of ten." Generations of torturers and military henchmen in Latin America and elsewhere got their training at the U.S. military's infamous School of the Americas at Fort Benning, Georgia. As we wrote in 2004 as the photos of torture at Abu Ghraib prison in U.S.-occupied Iraq came to light internationally:

> "The photos only partially expose a small part of the terror and atrocities which in fact are meted out daily to U.S. imperialism's victims worldwide, as well as inside the U.S. itself. From the prison camp in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba to the death rows of Texas; from systematic mass murder and torture of Vietnamese liberation fighters in the CIA's 'Operation Phoenix' program in Vietnam to the death squads in Latin America; from Britain's Long Kesh prison to the basements of French colonial Algiers; from Chile's Santiago Stadium to Israel's Ashkelon, an awful network of torture and death, going back in time, spans the world. These are not 'aberrations.' They are the conscious policies of imperialist and neocolonialist ruling regimes, who routinely and necessarily use terror and degradation as tools to maintain their power."
>
> —"U.S. Imperialism's Torture, Inc." (*WV* No. 826, 14 May 2004)

The International Socialist Organization (ISO), which enthused that Obama's election is "a reason to believe that change *is* possible" (*Socialist Worker* online, 21 January), now writes: "Obama's reversal of his earlier decision to grant immunity for the torturers is a critical first step in putting the torturers on notice—the architects as well as the bricklayers. If more of them ended up behind bars, their would-be imitators will be less confident" (*Socialist Worker*, 30 April). In fact, in decrying Bush's *open* policy of torture—and posing the possibility of any prosecutions—Obama's aim is to refurbish the image of U.S. imperialism after eight years under the Bush gang. As Obama himself put it, such "interrogation techniques...undermine our moral authority."

What distinguished the oddly demented regime of George Bush and Dick Cheney is that it openly reveled in its barbarity and sought to give torture legal sanction. The recently revealed Justice Department memos, written by lawyers of the Office of Legal Counsel, were clearly crafted with the aim of providing "legal" cover to those carrying out the sadistic practices they described. For example, "stress positions"—such as "shackling," in which a standing detainee's handcuffed wrists are "attached by a length of chain to the ceiling" to force "sleep deprivation"—were declared to in no way constitute "severe pain or suffering." By putting U.S. imperialism's grisly

continued on page 10

South Africa:
Doctors Strike Defies Government.....3

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On the Economy

28 January 2009

Comrades,

Enclosed find a copy of *The Furrow* for January 2009. Please note the article on Cuba. When I was at the John Deere Pavilion in Moline, Illinois recently I saw the publication (free for the taking) and the article. I thought it might he useful to you. Page 3 of the puhlication explains well what it is.

I also would like to make a few comments on Seymour's article in *WV* #927 [2 January] "Capitalist Economic Crisis:...." Over all I think it was a good article, and I have no serious problems with it. I did notice that in discussing the economic history he completely missed the so-called "farm crises" of the mid 1980's. This was the result of overextended Agricultural credit among other things. It had effects beyond the farm sector. Also there is an attempt to minimize the effect of deregulation, especially in banking, on the cause of the current economic crises. True, this is bigger than the banking crisis, and the economic cycle is inherent in capitalism. However, each individual economic fluctuation has its own unique causes or triggers if you will. There is a lesson to he learned. The capitalists estahlished regulations after the disaster of the great depression of the 1930's to prevent some of the speculative schemes that led them to disaster in the 1930's. These were made law. A later generation, notably the Reagan years and after saw any hindrance to capitalism as bad, hence the laws were repealed. The point is that you cannot reform or legislate your way out of the capitalist economic cycle. Even if you can control aspects of it for a time the interplay of politics and economics (or capitalist greed) will overcome-change the laws.

In Solidarity
Loren

Obama and Gun Control

2 March 2009

GREETINGS:

I noted a comment on Obama's COS [Chief of Staff] and VP Emanuel and Biden. As an NRA life member I would like to comment that you neglect Biden's and R. Emanuel's strong opposition to 2nd Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution. The right to workers' self defence as exercised thru the right to keep and bear arms has long been under attack by Obama, Biden and RE [Rahm Emanuel] who as B. Clinton's man pushed thru the phony "assault weapons ban." Note also G. Soros is a long time supporter of disarming the people. Disarming the citizens is one part of the billionaires' agenda that is way behind schedule. I think they expected to be much farther down the path hy now and this is a serious obstacle to further planned oppression of the workers. Unfortunately, the reactionary Bush gang was able to cleverly use the pro gun vote to "win" two elections, as the NRA vote probably made the difference. The democrats learned the lesson the hard way and Obama, long a strong antigun politician, was forced to pay lip service to the gun "lohhy" (voters) even though I feel that now in power they will continue to push the disarmament agenda ...although I think they aren't really sure how to go about it especially given the Heller decision of the USSC [U.S. Supreme Court]. Too many people own firearms in this country for the politicians to put into effect any plan to take them away. It gets real problematical when a worker thru no fault of his own has no job, no money, no food, no house and still has a gun...note record sales of weapons and ammunition.... [ellipses in original]

Peter S.

***WV* replies:**

We thank Peter S. for his letter. For more on our opposition to gun control, see "Revolution and the Right to Bear Arms—The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 43-44, Summer 1989). In that article, we noted: "The whole history of gun control is the story of the ruling class trying to *disorm* the population."

Religion: Spiritual Bondage

TROTSKY

LENIN

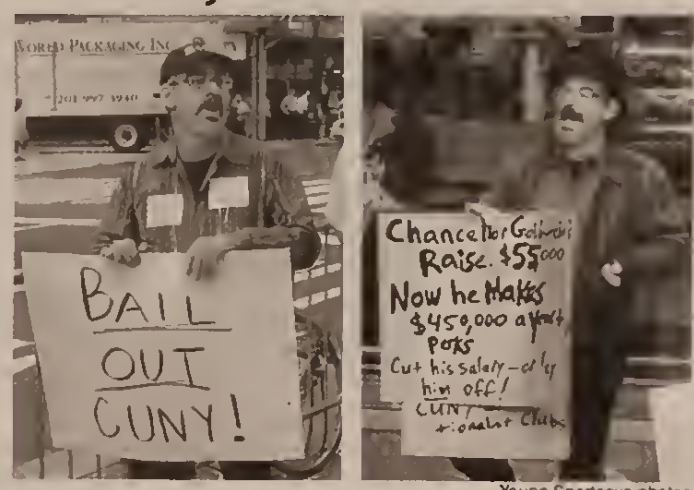
Writing in May 1918, Bolshevik leader Nikolai Bukharin outlined the Marxist approach to the struggle against religion and religious institutions, including by drawing on the experiences of the young Soviet republic that issued out of the 1917 October Revolution.

Religion must by faught, if not by vialence, at all events by argument. The Church must be separated from the State. That means that the priests may remain, but should be maintained by those who wish to accept their poison from them or by those who are interested in their existence. There is a poison called opium; when that is smoked, sweet visions appear; you feel as if you were in paradise. But its action tells on the health of the smoker. His health is gradually ruined, and little hy little he becomes a meek idiot. The same applies to religion. There are people who wish to smoke opium; but it would be absurd if the State maintained at its expense, that is to say, at the expense of the people, opium dens and special men to serve them. For this reason the Church must be (and already is) treated in the same way: priests, bishops, archbishops, patriarchs, abbots and the rest of the lot must be refused State maintenance. Let the believers, if they wish it, feed the holy fathers at their own expense on the fat of the land, a thing which they, the priests, greatly appreciate.

On the other hand, freedom of thought must be guaranteed. Hence the axiom that religion is a private affair. This does not mean that we should not struggle against it by freedom of argument. It means that the State should support no church organisation. As regards this question, the programme of the Bolshevik Communists *has been carried out oll over Russia*. Priests of all creeds have been deprived of State subsidy. And that is the reason why they have become so furious and have twice anathematised the present Government, i.e.. the Government of the workers, by excommunicating all workers from the church. We must note this. At the time of the Tsar they knew well enough the text in the Scripture which says, "There is no power but from God," and "The powers that be are to be obeyed." They willingly sprinkled executioners with holy water. But why have they forgotten these texts at a time when the workers are at the head of the Government? Is it possible that the will of God does not hold good when there is a Communist Government? What can the reason be? The thing is very simple. The Soviet Government is the *first* Government in Russia to attack the pockets of the clergy. And this, by the way, is a priest's most sensitive spot. The clergy are now in the camp of the "oppressed bourgeoisie." They are working secretly and openly against the working class. But times have changed, and the masses of the labouring class are not so prone to become the easy prey to deceit they were before. Such is the great educational significance of the Revolution; revolution liberates us from *economic* slavery, but it also frees us from *spiritual* bondage.

—Nikolai Bukharin, *Programme of the World Revolution* (1918)

Two Pictures Are Worth 2,000 Words



Young Spertecus photos

Same politics, different hat: IG supporter Sándor John "explains" sign he carried last September (left). What about the other sign? Explanation pending.

21 April 2009

To the editor, *Workers Vanguard*:

The dishonesty of your recent polemic on protests at the City University of New York (*WV* No. 934, 10 April) is captured in your cynical use of a photo taken at the September 23 demonstration outside the CUNY Graduate Center. As I entered the demonstration, I was handed a poster reading "Bail Out CUNY," at which point your photographer snapped her picture. She then watched me look down, read what it said, and place it on the ground. All of this took place in less than one minute. Moreover, in my speech that day I explicitly addressed *why* I did not carry that sign. True, having had their "gotcha" moment, your reporters did not stick around for the speeches. However, for the past five months they have been in possession of the *Class Struggle Education Workers Newsletter* (November-Decemher 2008), which quotes from my speech as follows:

> "Someone handed me a sign saying 'Bail Out CUNY.' It's certainly grotesque that CUNY gets cuts while Wall Street speculators get more than $700 billion. But it's not that the ruling class is just somehow confused about 'priorities.' We have to reject the whole framework. What we need is not this or that different bail-out but to *kick out* the capitalists whose wars abroad go hand in hand with a war on us and our right to education here 'at home.'"

So you know full well the real political story, but from your cynical standpoint, anything goes. Why? Because I am a supporter of the Internationalist Group. The rest of the "polemic" is in the same vein: an exercise in amalgams, distortions and puerility.

Sándor John

***WV* replies:**

In reading Sándor John's letter, we cannot help but recall Richard Pryor's rendition of Chico Marx's line: "Who're you gonna believe, me or your lying eyes?" Regarding the opportunist shenanigans of the Internationalist Group at CUNY, including those of the ubiquitous John, we don't have much to add to what we wrote in "For Free, Quality, Integrated Education for All!" That article noted that at a Novemher 2008 rally, IG supporter John was holding another sign referring to CUNY Chancellor Goldstein that called to "Cut his salary—or lay him off!" Also picked up by mistake?■

Letters Policy

Workers Vanguard welcomes letters from our readers. Opinions expressed in letters do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the *WV* Editorial Board. We reserve the right to respond to letters either at the time of publication or at a later point. We verify the authenticity of letters puhlished in *Workers Vanguard*; only letters received with contact information will be considered for publication. Letters can bc published anonymously if the author so desires. In order to facilitate the printing of letters, which we do not edit, please keep them to 500 words or less. Letters can be sent to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 or e-mailed to vanguard@tiac.net.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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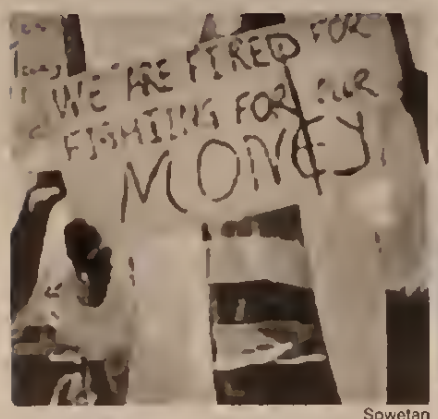
The closing date for news in this issue is May 5.

No. 936 **8 May 2009**

Neo-Apartheid South Africa: "Public Health" Hell



Sowetan

Above: Doctors protest outside George Mukhari Hospital in Ga-Rankuwa.

Gideon Mendel

Mail & Guardian

Left: Patients wait for treatment at Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto. Above: Strikebreaking health minister Barbara Hogan.

Doctors Strike Defies ANC/SACP/COSATU Government

MAY 4—Starting in the Pretoria area on April 16, doctors in at least 28 public hospitals throughout South Africa have carried out wildcat strikes, "go-slows" and protests against unbearably low pay and horrendous conditions. Pushed to the wall, the doctors, banned by law from striking, faced down the capitalist government of the African National Congress (ANC) and its Tripartite Alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the COSATU trade-union federation. The government mobilized military medical personnel to try to break the strike and threatened hundreds of doctors with dismissal, including those who defied a back-to-work court order.

Strikers have now returned to work and the government has replaced the dismissal notices with final warnings. The doctors are demanding that the government finally begin paying up to 50-percent increases in salaries, as it agreed to do in settling a four-week public sector strike in 2007, and they are also calling for improvements in the hospitals. The doctors fight against all odds to do their jobs in a woefully underfunded system that is hell for patients and staff alike. The basic pay for public sector doctors is around 10,000-19,000 Rand (about $1,200-2,300) per month, with junior doctors and interns making substantially less.

A spokesman for the United Doctors' Forum, a group formed during the strike, declared: "We will strike again if our needs aren't met..., Our action may be illegal, but our reasons for doing so are very legitimate" (*Mail & Guardian*, 1 May). According to today's *Sowetan*, the government is offering measly increases of 0.28 to 5 percent. A doctor at George Mukhari Hospital in Ga-Rankuwa township outside Pretoria told our comrades of Spartacist South Africa that while full doctors who were fired could easily find work elsewhere, striking interns, who by many accounts were the backbone of the strike, had no such assurance. With an all-black staff, this teaching hospital was the epicenter of the strike. The SSA stands in full support of the doctors and their demands. No firings! No reprisals!

Running point for the capitalist government were the misleaders of the COSATU-affiliated SA Medical Association (SAMA) and DENOSA nurses union, who denounced the strike from the outset. This betrayal demonstrates in practice the role of the COSATU tops and their SACP overseers in the Tripartite Alliance: to police the working class on behalf of the capitalist rulers. The Alliance partners are reveling in the ANC's victory—with nearly two-thirds of the vote—in the April 22 parliamentary elections, which clears the way for Jacob Zuma, tirelessly portrayed by the SACP/COSATU tops as the friend of trade unions and the black masses, to become president of South Africa. The bourgeois press is filled with jubilant statements about the "free and fair" elections, while virtually the entire political spectrum talks about a shift to the left. For the workers and the poor there is nothing to celebrate! The day after the election the ANC demonstrated how much of a "friend" this government will be by organizing military doctors to break the strike!

The Tripartite Alliance is a nationalist popular front binding the mainly black working class to its class enemy through the bourgeois-nationalist ANC. Since it first took office in 1994 following the demise of racist apartheid rule, this government has upheld the neo-apartheid capitalist order by breaking strikes and enforcing austerity. Under Nelson Mandela, the same government that decreed free health care for children under six ordered spending cuts that led to hospital wards being closed, medical equipment being denied to staff and clinics being denied drugs. When nurses walked out in 1995 to demand better pay and working conditions, a number of SACP/COSATU bureaucrats branded their action a "counterrevolutionary strike." Some 6,000 nurses were fired by the Eastern Cape provincial government headed by the late Raymond Mhlaba, who was SACP national chairman at the time. As Safety and Security Minister in 2007, leading SACPer Charles Nqakula set the army and cops against striking COSATU public employees.

Class-conscious workers must defend the doctors as the first line of defense in the fight for free, quality health care for all! As one striker put it, "It's not just the pay but also the working conditions. There is such a shortage of doctors so we have too many patients to see. Then the hospitals run out of basic antibiotics and Panados [acetaminophen]." While strikers reportedly received verbal sympathy from nurses and cleaning staff, they were stabbed in the back by the union tops and left to strike on their own. There is a history of different sectors of the workforce being pitted against each other, including along "professional" lines. The attacks by the bourgeois government against nurses

continued on page 11

Death Penalty Appeal Denied

Free Troy Davis!

On April 16, a federal appeals court in Atlanta turned down a petition for habeas corpus *by Troy Davis, who was framed up and convicted in 1991 for the killing of a cop. Davis, who was just two hours away from execution last September, is again facing legal lynching.*

In refusing to even consider the overwhelming evidence of Davis's innocence, the federal court relied on Bill Clinton's 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which virtually eliminated the right of habeas corpus *appeal for those sentenced to death in state courts. This law has also been the pretext for the federal courts' refusal to hear evidence of death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal's innocence. Davis has until May 16 to appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, the same racist court that refused to consider his case last October. In the 1993 case of Leonel Herrera, the Supreme Court declared that execution of an innocent man did not violate the Constitution. The following May 2 protest letter was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—to Georgia governor George Ervin Perdue.*

We are again writing to protest the threatened execution of Troy Anthony Davis. On April 16, in a two to one decision, the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals grotesquely denied Davis's appeal despite the massive evidence that he is innocent. His legal lynching is now stayed for 30 days, pending an appeal to the pro-death penalty U.S. Supreme Court.

Mr. Davis's conviction was based on the testimony of "eyewitnesses" who were intimidated by policemen to falsely implicate him in the death of a white off-duty police officer. Seven of the nine prosecution witnesses have since recanted, several citing police misconduct. Evidence has shown that one of those still maintaining his original testimony is himself a suspect in the killing. The dissenting judge in the recent federal court decision said that the execution of Davis, "in the face of a significant amount of the proffered evidence that may establish his actual innocence," was "unconscionable."

Thousands of protests worldwide, including from Amnesty International and the Vatican, have railed against the execution of Troy Davis. The death penalty is cruel and barbaric. In the United States it is the racist legacy of centuries of slavery: it is the lynch rope made legal. We once again demand this racist atrocity be stopped and that Troy Davis be freed.■

lawanddisorder.org

Troy Davis with his mother in 2002.

Labor Misleaders Push "National Security" Patriotism

"War on Terror" Crackdown on the Docks

OAKLAND—The government's "war on terror" has hit hundreds of thousands of workers at ports from coast to coast with the national implementation of the Transportation Workers Identity Credential (TWIC), completed on April 14. A biometric ID card that was described by the *New York Times* (14 May 2006) as "an identity card equivalent of a maximum security prison," a TWIC card is now mandatory to work on the docks. To qualify, all port workers had to submit to extensive criminal background and immigration checks. According to the *Journal of Commerce* (20 April), as of April 9 close to 38,000 port workers had been turned down. While some 18,000 succeeded in the appeals process, which can take months, another 10,000 reportedly gave up. For the thousands of overwhelmingly immigrant port truckers, as well as the black and Latino port workers targeted under the racist "war on drugs," to even apply for a TWIC card runs the risk of possible deportation or being pursued as some kind of "fugitive from justice."

A March 30 statement by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) reports that hundreds of longshoremen who have been denied a TWIC card are currently out of a job with no access to unemployment insurance, with their appeals caught up in the Kafkaesque bureaucratic maze of the Transport Security Administration (TSA). An unknown number of longshore and other port workers are permanently gone, branded as a "threat to national security" for offenses ranging from drug possession with intent to distribute to fraud to being an "illegal" immigrant. Yet the response of the ILWU International was to call for "improving the TWIC program and port security" by providing more "staffing and resources to properly administer the TWIC program" in order to expedite the process. This is like calling for more "staffing and resources" to enforce the pass laws in apartheid South Africa!

When the Bush administration, with the fervent support of the Democrats, first enacted the USA Patriot Act and the Maritime Transportation Security Act as part of the so-called "war on terror," the assaults on the democratic rights of ***all of us***.... But what America's racist rulers can get away with will be determined by class struggle. We must fight ***now*** to defend our rights and jobs, and the rights and jobs of our immigrant brothers and sisters. A united demonstration of the power of our class, together with youth, black and immigrant organizations, can spike the bosses' racist 'national unity' campaign."

—"Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!" *WV* No. 773 (25 January 2002)

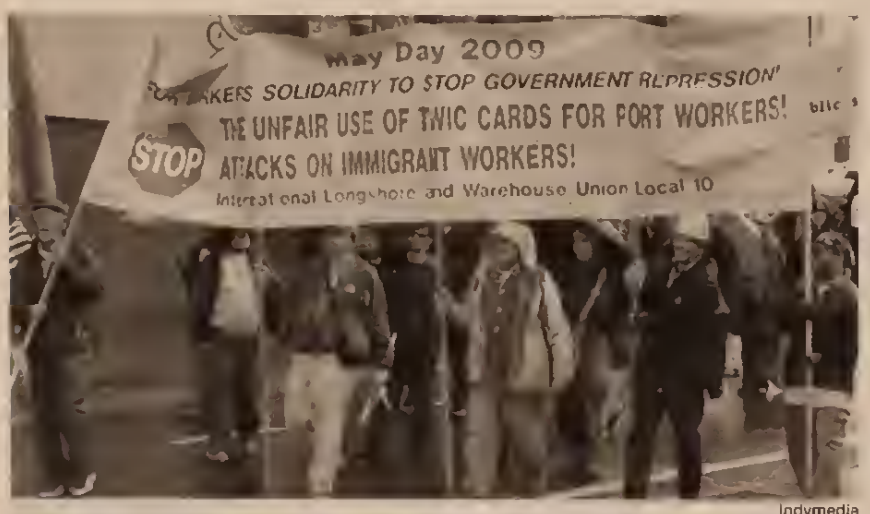
WV Photo

Bay Area longshoremen were at core of February 2002 united-front, labor-centered mobilization initiated by Partisan Defense Committee and Labor Black League in defense of immigrant rights and against government's "war on terror."

Bay Area Labor Black League for Social Defense and the Partisan Defense Committee issued a call for a labor-centered, united-front protest. ILWU Local 10 was one of the early endorsers of this protest and black longshoremen were at the core of the 300-strong demonstration in Oakland on 9 February 2002, which declared: "Anti-Terrorist Laws Target Immigrants, Blacks, Labor—No to the USA-Patriot Act and the Maritime Security Act! Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!" The LBL/PDC call for the protest urged:

> "We call on the powerful multiracial unions in the Bay Area to mobilize against the government's war on America's integrated working class, on black people and on immigrants. Every bombing raid and missile attack on Afghanistan came together with new deadly assaults on the democratic rights of ***all of us***.... But what America's racist rulers can get away with will be determined by class struggle. We must fight ***now*** to defend our rights and jobs, and the rights and jobs of our immigrant brothers and sisters. A united demonstration of the power of our class, together with youth, black and immigrant organizations, can spike the bosses' racist 'national unity' campaign."
>
> —"Down With the Anti-Immigrant Witchhunt!" *WV* No. 773 (25 January 2002)

This protest was an exemplary action that, on a small scale, illustrated the class-struggle, internationalist program that is vital if the unions are going to be mobilized in a genuine fight in defense of themselves, immigrants, black people and all those in the government's cross hairs. Advancing the class consciousness and solidarity of the multiracial working class must begin with workers' understanding of their common interests as a class in opposition to those of the political parties and state agencies of the capitalist class enemy. This stands in complete counterposition to the program of the union misleaders, who shackle the working class to its exploiters, particularly through support for the Democratic Party, and who openly embrace the "national security" interests of the U.S. imperialist rulers as their own.



Indymedia

ILWU Local 10 banner at San Francisco May Day rally. Longshore union bureaucrats call for "fair" implementation of government-enforced labor discipline.

TWIC: Enforcing Labor Discipline on the Docks

In a "2008 Presidential Questionnaire" directed to Barack Obama and other Democrats, the ILWU tops pledged the union's service in the "war on terror," declaring that the "ILWU workforce should be utilized as the first line of defense against maritime terrorist activities, and recognized as a natural ally by law enforcement." It is not the job of the workers to enforce the laws, "security" or otherwise, of the capitalist state—laws that are ultimately aimed at the working class! The whole purpose of TWIC is government-enforced labor discipline against the unions. The day after the TWIC program was implemented at the Oakland port, armed Coast Guard officials went on the docks to demand that longshore workers show them their TWIC cards. Given that these longshoremen already had to show their TWIC cards to security guards (who outrageously are members of the ILWU) to even enter the terminal, this was simply a show of force aimed at demonstrating the military muscle that will be mobilized to police the workforce on the docks.

During the ILWU's 2002 contract battle, the head of Homeland Security phoned the union's International president to warn that a strike would be treated as a threat to "national security," while the Bush administration trained military personnel to work the cranes on the ports. With the implementation of TWIC, it's not just threats but official policy, and one enforced by the Democratic Obama administration.

TWIC is another strikebreaking weapon in the bosses' arsenal, as any involvement in a "transportation security incident"—which includes "transportation system disruption or economic disruption in a specific area"—is grounds for being permanently disqualified from working on the docks. The ILWU bureaucracy congratulated itself for ensuring that a "work stoppage, or other nonviolent employee-related action" not be included in this category. The hard-fought and bloody battles against strikebreaking cops that laid the basis for founding the ILWU give the lie to the bureaucrats' myth of "nonviolent" struggle. In a year that marks the 75th anniversary of the 1934 San Francisco longshore strike that won the union hiring hall, wresting control of who works out of the hands of the employers' corrupt "shape-up" agents, it is now the forces of the capitalist state that are determining who can and cannot work on the docks.

"War on Terror": Racism and Union-Busting

This is not the first time that the government has used "national security" to purge the ILWU and other unions. In 1950, just weeks after the outbreak of the Korean War, the U.S. government instituted a port security program to drive Communists, Trotskyists, socialists and other labor militants out of the unions. By the end of 1956, Coast Guard screening had denied security clearances to 3,783 waterfront and maritime workers; 243 of them were members of ILWU Local 10, and two-thirds of those were black.

.The "war against terrorism" is a political construct whose purpose domestically has been to massively increase the police

Down With TWIC and the Maritime Transportation Security Act!

powers and repressive apparatus of the capitalist state. And under the provisions of TWIC, the purge of the unions is fed by another such "war"—the racist "war on drugs." Any worker who has been convicted within the last seven years, or released from prison in the last five years, for offenses such as possession of drugs with intent to distribute, identity fraud, robbery and unlawful possession of firearms are denied cards and therefore their livelihoods. In a country whose prisons are overflowing with young black and Latino men, most of them rounded up for drug offenses, the target of these "security" proscriptions is all too obvious. It doesn't matter if you "served your time," you remain branded an outlaw and are now a supposed threat to "national security," in a society where the unemployment rate for ex-convicts is a staggering 75 percent. In 2006, some 70 mostly black Chicago rail workers were fired under Homeland Security regulations barring ex-felons from working such jobs.

Members of the International Longshore Association in Charleston, South Carolina, told *WV* that TWIC has even been used at that port to go after "deadbeat dads," "welfare cheats" and other supposed miscreants. We call for the decriminalization of drugs and the full restoration of all citizenship rights to ex-convicts.

An early example of the enforcement of "port security" was seen in the brutal police attack on two black longshoremen, Jason Ruffin and Aaron Harrison of ILWU Local 10, in August 2007. Returning to work at the Sacramento port after a lunch break, Ruffin and Harrison were stopped by security guards who demanded to search their car, citing maritime security regulations. When the two ILWU members called the Local 10 business agent for advice, the guards called in the cops. Dragged from their car, assaulted, maced and handcuffed, Harrison and Ruffin were thrown in jail on charges of trespassing and resisting arrest. A trial of the two longshoremen this January resulted in a hung jury but the state is continuing its vindictive prosecution, retrying these ILWU members whose only "crime" was trying to return to work and asking their union for help in doing so! Drop the charges against Harrison and Ruffin!

Under TWIC, any undocumented worker whose job requires access to the ports, which includes many of the port truckers, will be thrown out of work and face possible deportation. America's capitalist rulers are practiced hands at fomenting racial and ethnic hostilities to divide the working class and build up the repressive powers of the capitalist state. The fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants and for black rights is key to the elementary defense of the unions against the government's "war on terror" dragnet on the docks. Instead, the union misleaders have criminally joined the racist rulers' "national security" crusade against foreign-born workers.

ILWU Tops Enlist in the Racist "War on Terror"

The ILWU International bureaucrats' March 30 statement, "Comments for Improving the TWIC Program and Port Security," expresses concern that the "delays and backlogs being suffered by port workers are creating strong, negative opinions against TWIC." To restore faith in the "war on terror," these sellouts argue that ILWU members who have "unfairly" been ensnared in the TWIC application process should be provided an escort onto the docks while they await their cards. The statement goes on to declare:

> "It is unjust and un-American to administer the TWIC program in a way that denies port employees, whose applications have already been approved, access to their jobs because inadequate government staffing and funding prevent timely delivery of their TWIC card.... Denial of escort to American longshoremen becomes grossly offensive and unconscionable when so many others, including truck drivers and ship's crews, mostly foreign nationals, regularly receive escorting privileges."

This grotesque red-white-and-blue chauvinism is an attack not only on the immigrant, non-union port truckers but also on the very existence of the ILWU itself, reinforcing its increasing isolation as the last bastion of union power on the West Coast ports. Rather than fighting to organize the truckers, the longshore and Teamsters union bureaucrats have long pointed to them as the real "security threat."

Molloy/Oakland Tribune

Striking port truckers protest scab trucks at Oakland port in May 2008.

Left-talking ILWU Local 10 bureaucrat Jack Heyman is providing a (barely) left gloss for this "America first" patriotism, just as he did during the port shutdown against the occupation of Iraq last May Day, which the ILWU tops made into a show of their loyalty to U.S. imperialism and support for Barack Obama. This year, Heyman was one of the initiators of a call for another May Day work stoppage. An April 24 leaflet by the "Port Workers May Day Organizing Committee" called to "defend our members who are unfairly denied work" and to protest "the unfair implementation of TWIC cards for port workers." What about those who have been "fairly" denied work and those, e.g., "un-American" undocumented workers and others, branded as "security threats"?

The answer can be found in Heyman's article, "Civil Liberties and Labor Rights of Port Workers Are Being Thrown Overboard" (*Daily Breeze*, 11 April). Complaining that "in some ports, truckers are allowed access with an escort but longshoremen are not," Heyman goes on to take aim at "foreign" as opposed to "American" seamen, writing: "Seamen on foreign flag vessels that constitute 95 percent of ocean-borne shipping don't need TWIC cards, but seamen on American-registered vessels do"! Himself an integral part of the union bureaucracy, Heyman's usual role is to provide a veneer of left-sounding "militancy." But his carping about the port truckers and foreign seamen is simply a blatant echo of the ILWU International's chauvinism.

Heyman's article concludes: "These Keystone Kops' scenarios show the absurdity of this program and why it should be scuttled." Opposition to TWIC is not a question of its bumbling or capricious implementation, it is a fundamental issue of defense of the unions, immigrants, black people and all those lined up in the sights of the government's "anti-terror" laws. What Heyman points to as an example of opposition to TWIC is a petition circulated in the Portland ILWU local that urges "the United States Government to protect its citizens' rights and end the Transportation Worker Identification Card." Both in hanging immigrants out to dry and in embracing the U.S. government as the instrument for protecting longshoremen against that government's own laws, this is simply the mirror image of the bureaucracy's patriotic salute of "national security."

For the ILWU and other longshore unions to wage a real fight against TWIC and the racist, union-busting "war on terror" laws, the obvious starting point must be *opposition* to the very state that is enforcing these laws. It means championing full citizenship rights for all immigrants and fighting to organize foreign-born workers, many of whom bring lessons of militant class struggle from their own countries. In a country built on the subjugation of black people, where racist reaction has long served to ratchet up the exploitation of the working class as a whole, the fight for black freedom is directly linked to the fight to break the chains of capitalist wage slavery and the state forces and laws that maintain it. But to wage that kind of struggle, the unions must be led by a different kind of leadership, one rooted in a program of class struggle, as opposed to the present misleaders whose policies of class collaboration increasingly subordinate the unions to the capitalist state.

For a Workers Party to Fight for a Workers Government!

It would have been a powerful statement if the ILWU had shut down the ports on May Day in opposition to TWIC and

WV Photo

ILWU members Jason Ruffin (speaking) and Aaron Harrison at 4 October 2007 protest against their arrest.

in defense of immigrant rights. But that was not even what Heyman was building. In any event, his call for a port shutdown never got off the ground...because the Pacific Maritime Association wouldn't give its permission. Available jobs were dispatched from the Local 10 hall and the American President Lines and Transbay port terminals were worked. Only a handful of longshoremen came out to the protest in defense of immigrant rights (a cause that Heyman outrageously affronts with his appeal for the "fair" implementation of TWIC and complaints about port truckers and foreign seamen).

On May Day, Heyman was handing out a new leaflet dated May 1. Signed by himself and another ILWU Local 10 member, it proclaims that the April 24 leaflet put out by the Port Workers May Day Organizing Committee "didn't properly put forward the tasks we face." Heyman's May 1 "Oops!" went on to explain that "it is necessary to emphasize how we've opposed the phony patriotic notion that 'we're the first line of defense' pushed by the maritime bosses, their government and even some [!] union officials. They try to set U.S. and 'foreign' workers against each other but we have actively defended international seamen in American ports and dockworkers in other countries." "Phony patriotic notion"?! There is nothing phony about it, and it's in line with Heyman's own rants against "foreign" seamen in the *Daily Breeze*. Heyman's May 1 leaflet is a piece of fancy footwork coming from a man who knows a thing or two about deception. In the leaflet, Heyman claims that Local 10 will be marching "behind a banner calling 'For Workers Solidarity to Stop Government Repression' against immigrants and port workers." Conveniently omitted is the fact that one of the *main* slogans on the banner reads, "Stop the Unfair Use of TWIC Cards for Port Workers!"

Hoping for another photo op to promote Heyman's credentials as a class-struggle militant, Internationalist Group (IG) leader Jan Norden flew in for the "port shutdown." Last year, the IG was in the forefront of enthusing for the May Day port shutdown, which was against the occupation of Iraq (but not Afghanistan, the preferred war of the Democrats). That shutdown pointed the way to the kind of working-class action that is needed against the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. But the pro-capitalist politics of the ILWU leadership undermined this action. At the 2008 San Francisco May Day rally, which was politically dominated by speakers from the Democratic and Green parties, a statement was read out from International president Bob McEllrath heralding longshore workers as "loyal to America" as opposed to "foreign corporations that control global shipping." The statement declared, "We're standing up for America, we're supporting the troops." Such vile "America first" chauvinism was a pledge of allegiance to the bloody U.S. occupiers against the peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan.

For his part, Heyman put forward a soft-core version of the same politics as his counterparts in the ILWU bureaucracy. As we wrote in "ILWU Shuts West Coast Ports on May Day" (*WV* No. 914, 9 May 2008):

> "While an April leaflet by Heyman denounced 'phony appeals to patriotism,' he has made clear his own appeal to patriotism. At an April 29 press conference sponsored by the Oakland Education Association, Heyman declared: 'We want the troops home. That's what our members said at a meeting we had back in February and it was our Vietnam vets who brought the point home, very close to their hearts. And they said enough is enough, people are dying over there for nothing. It's not a war about democracy, it's for oil and empire'."

The IG covered for Heyman, who in turn covered for the rest of the ILWU bureaucracy, who were busy saluting the flag. In the *Internationalist* (May 2008), the IG trumpeted that the port action "raises the challenge ahead: *to go from resistance to a struggle for power*" (emphasis in original). As we wrote in response in the *WV* No. 914 article: "To struggle for power assumes that you oppose the existing power! As Trotskyists (i.e., genuine Marxists), our purpose is to arm the proletariat with the consciousness and leadership necessary for combat with the forces of the capitalist class. This means taking on the class-collaborationist politics of the trade-union bureaucracy (as well as the politics of those who falsely claim to offer a revolutionary alternative)."

The worldview of the labor tops, including left-talkers like Heyman, is defined by what is "practical" or possible under capitalism. Ours is a different purpose: to build a workers party to give a conscious class-struggle leadership to struggles against U.S. imperialism and its bloody depredations against the peoples of the world and the working class and oppressed at home. Grounded in a program of revolutionary internationalism, such a party will fight not only for the immediate interests of the working class but for its liberation, and the emancipation of all of humanity, from the very real terror of capitalist class rule, by bringing to power the socialist rule of the multiracial proletariat.■

Young Spartacus

Australian Socialist Alternative: God-Deluded Opportunists

On Marxism and Religion

We reprint below, in slightly edited form, an article from Australasian Spartacist *No. 204 (Autumn 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

Australasian **SPARTACIST**

For youth repelled by the exploitative capitalist system and beginning to explore socialist ideas, organisations claiming the mantle of Marxism might seem a bewildering assortment. Reading an article in *Socialist Alternative* (Oct-Nov 2008) titled "The Real Story of What Marxists Think of Religion," you could forgive such potential revolutionaries their confusion. Eulogising religion as having the potential to be a "platform for resistance to oppression," Socialist Alternative (SAlt) [linked with the International Socialist Organization in the U.S.] contend that Marxism isn't opposed to religion at all! "What!?" such youth might exclaim, "What happened to Marxism being scientific and atheist?"

Perhaps it was one such individual who wrote to *Socialist Alternative* (November 2008), calling on SAlt to stop sugar-coating religion and observing that "Islam like Judaism and Christianity are tools of the oppressors." The letter provoked a venomous response. Three replies, including from SAlt cadre, published in the "Dec 08-Jan 09" issue denounced the correspondent as on the "elitist, atheist 'God Delusion' bandwagon" and "filled with Islamophobic shit" having "sucked up... the anti-Muslim mind poison, sugar-coated in leftism fed to you by the ruling class." While we are not uncritical of the original (edited) letter and have no way of knowing fully what the writer stands for, SAlt's unhinged response, like their article penned by Patrick Weiniger, is a bald-faced repudiation of Marxism.

As Marxist revolutionaries who want to change this world and end human exploitation and oppression, we're firmly on the side of science, which studies the natural world and validates theories by observation and experiment, as opposed to religion which asserts blind faith in an unreal, supernatural power controlling events. We are, in the words of Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin, "absolutely atheistic and positively hostile to all religion." At the same time we oppose all forms of religious persecution and oppression. Thus our comrades in the U.S. have opposed the arrest of Mormons for practising polygamy (see *WV* No. 916, 6 June 2008). Comrades in France and elsewhere have protested government moves to ban the Islamic *hijab* or headscarf in schools, noting that such persecution can only reinforce the grip of religion by driving women out of secular society.

We stand opposed to the imperialist impoverishment and exploitation of the masses of the neocolonial world, but this does not mean that we are cultural relativists who prettify the horrible status quo in such countries. Thus we oppose hideous "customs" such as female genital mutilation or the head-to-toe veil. While recognising that people should be able to hold their religious beliefs without interference from the state, we oppose religion dictating the policy of the state.

Upholding the liberating ideals of the Enlightenment and Marxism, we revolutionaries fight for the complete separation of religion and state! In fact, the full separation of religion and state has nowhere been fully realised by the bourgeoisie for the simple reason that religion has great value for the ruling class in its struggle against the proletariat. With its deep social roots, religion serves to buttress the institution of the family, the main source of women's oppression, and ruling-class authority. All modern religion acts as an instrument of capitalist reaction that defends exploitation and befuddles the working people.

Robert B. Luce, Inc.

Bolshevik leader Alexandra Kollontai with Central Asian women, drinking wine in defiance of teachings of Koran.

Our goal is to build a revolutionary party that can lead the working class in its historic task of overthrowing capitalism and replacing it with socialism. Only then will religion, which enforces mindless subordination to "higher authority" and is responsible for so much guilt and misery, quickly wither through education once its state props are kicked away.

Down With Anti-Muslim Racism!

We Marxists have been forthright in our opposition to the racist "war on terror," opposing the bloody occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan abroad and the vile racist scapegoating of Muslims at home. Struggling in the interests of the whole working class, and against Laborite nationalism, we are for a class-struggle fight to defend the rights of Muslims and all immigrants and minorities. As for SAlt, for all their "militant anti-racist" posturing, come election day they fall into line behind the Labor Party [ALP] and racist capitalist rule. For example, in the 2001 elections SAlt advocated to "grit our teeth" and vote for the ALP, even as the ALP was demanding "security abroad, security at home" and trying to outdo the then-Howard government in support for the war on Afghanistan and the war on refugees.

In fact SAlt's "socialist alternative" has never extended beyond trying to pressure the pro-imperialist Labor Party. Thus, in the 2007 elections they championed a vote for the bourgeois Greens (an act of class treachery) as a means to apply pressure on Rudd's Labor Party. For our part we Spartacists declared the elections a bipartisan war on workers and minorities, and called for "No vote to ALP! No vote to bourgeois Greens!"

Under the cover of fighting against the "war on terror," SAlt poisonously insinuate that any criticism of Islam equals support for racist anti-Muslim persecution. In fact, from their written repudiation of the Marxist attitude toward religion to braying about their attendance at Muslim prayer meetings, SAlt foster backward consciousness among the masses, conciliating both religion and religious leaders such as the Muslim clerics involved in recent protests against Israel's murderous attacks on Gaza. This is no surprise as they and their forebears have long portrayed Muslim fundamentalism as "anti-imperialist" and even "revolutionary." Their outlook is both a product of their liberal opportunism and a direct outgrowth of their anti-communist hostility to the former Soviet Union and other societies where capitalism has been overthrown. It has led them to politically embrace such vile reactionary forces as the Vatican-backed Polish Solidarność (Solidarity) and the Islamic fundamentalist Afghan *mujahedin*.

To the extent that SAlt have influence, their program has actually helped create today's post-Soviet reactionary political climate marked by all-sided capitalist brutality and heightened religious obscurantism. In August 1991 when Boris Yeltsin's imperialist-backed forces of counterrevolution staged a countercoup in Moscow, every capitalist ruling class around the world celebrated. Then part of the International Socialists, SAlt cadre joined in the jubilation declaring that "'Communism is dead'.... It's a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*The Socialist*, September 1991).

SAlt: Haunted by the Spectre of Marx

As if to justify their anti-Marxist conciliation of religion, SAlt quote Karl Marx, who explained:

> "***Religious*** suffering is at one and the same time the ***expression*** of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the ***opium*** of the people."

SAlt piously claim, "Those who wish to present Marx as anti-religious trot out only the last sentence." One only need quote Marx's very next lines to expose this self-serving lie:

> "The abolition of religion as the ***illusory*** happiness of the people is the demand for their ***real*** happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to ***call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions***"
>
> —"Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" (1844)

Declaring "Marx was a democrat before he became a socialist," SAlt do their best, through selective quoting, to devolve him into a "harmless" modern-day bourgeois-liberal democrat.

To expunge the taint of atheism from their fake brand of "Marxism," under the heading "Islamophobia" SAlt pick on two prominent authors who are self-identified atheists. First they cite reactionary journalist Christopher Hitchens as "living proof that being an atheist does not make you more left-wing." In fact Hitchens' pro-imperialist warmongering over Iraq owes more to the classless pontificating about "tyranny" versus "democracy" fundamental to SAlt's worldview than to his non-Marxist critique of religion. Hitchens, once a member of SAlt's forebear, the anti-communist Cliffite International Socialists, long ago took the logical step to bourgeois reaction.

The other target of SAlt's anti-atheist vitriol is Richard Dawkins, evolutionary

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hiologist and writer of popular science. SAlt quote from *The God Delusion* where Dawkins gives a straightforward list of atrocities commited in the name of religion, including the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition. SAlt assert, "Dawkins argues that religion is to blame for war. This patently false idea provides a cover for imperialism." Never mind the fact that Dawkins protested Britain's involvement in the invasion of Iraq. False consciousness like religion and nationalism certainly *is* a powerful tool to inspire division in the working and oppressed masses, and in this epoch of imperialist reaction often provides the trip wire for the bloodiest conflicts.

Indonesia 1965-66 is but one chilling illustration. More than a million Communists, workers, peasants and ethnic Chinese were massacred when the Indonesian generals unleashed Islamic fundamentalist reactionaries to crush the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). In the face of this terror, the workers and peasants of Indonesia were politically, organisationally and militarily disarmed by the PKI program of "national unity," a popular-frontist alliance of bourgeois nationalists, Islamic groups and the PKI (see "Lessons of Indonesia 1965," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). The Australian and U.S. imperialists were up to their necks in these atrocities, promoting the mobilisation of Islamic reac-

Der Spiegel

Gdansk, Poland: Lech Walesa being blessed in 1980 by Solidarność "spiritual adviser," anti-Semitic priest Henryk Jankowski. *Time* magazine cover story on "Holy Alliance" between Pope and Reagan for capitalist counterrevolution.

tionaries against "godless communism" and providing the Indonesian generals with a hit list of some 5,000 Communists to exterminate. In helping to orchestrate this massacre the imperialists were applying an imperative noted in 1950 by then-U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles: "The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it" (cited in Paul A. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth*).

Hostile to the lessons of Indonesia 1965, the anti-communist opportunists of SAlt criminally encourage workers down the same blood-drenched popular-frontist path. A letter by Weiniger and Colleen Bolger published in *Socialist Alternative* (Dec 08-Jan 09) excitedly reported on the "Socialism and Islam" session they attended at a Socialist Party of Malaysia (PSM)-hosted conference last November. Enthusing that "we got to debate how the Left should relate to Islamic parties in a largely Muslim country," they lauded the PSM for "eschewing sectarian dismissal of Muslim political forces." No doubt they also support the PSM standing in the Malaysian elections last year under the banner of the main bourgeois opposition, which includes Islamic fundamentalists.

SAlt Slander the Bolsheviks

SAlt would have us believe that their chasing of religious "allies" has the endorsement of the Bolshevik Party that led the October 1917 Russian Revolution establishing the world's first workers state. In a September 2006 article, "Why Socialists Fight for Religious Freedom," cadre Diane Fieldes writes: "In some of the southern repuhlics of the USSR in the early 1920s as many as 15 per cent of party members were believers in Islam" and declares, "Muslims were encouraged to join the Communist Party."

Far from conciliating religion, Soviet policy in Central Asia recognised that the path to overthrowing the entrenched power of religion, in lands almost entirely devoid of a working class, mandated admitting a fraction of the *most conscious* members of society, outside the Europeanised elite, into the Communist parties. As Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky explained:

> "We will admit into our ranks those comrades who have yet to break from religion not in order to reconcile Marxism with Islam, but rather tactfully but persistently to free the backward members' consciousness of superstition, which in its very essence is the mortal enemy of communism."
>
> —"Tasks of Communist Education" (1923) in *Problems of Everyday Life*

SAlt lyingly infer that the Bolsheviks abandoned the bourgeois-democratic separation of church and state by claiming the young Soviet state accommodated *sharia* law, the 1,300-year-old body of Muslim canon law regulating every aspect of life including enforcing capital punishment for homosexuality and "honour killings" of women and girls accused of "improper" relations with men. According to Fieldes: "A parallel court system was created in 1921, with Islamic courts administering justice in accordance with sharia law alongside the soviet system. Thousands of Muslim schools were set up with government encouragement." In truth, as we wrote in "Early Bolshevik Work Among Women of the Soviet East" (*Women and Revolution* No. 12, Summer 1976):

> "...the Soviet government waged a campaign to build the authority of the Soviet legal system and civil courts as an alternative to the traditional Muslim *kadi* courts and legal codes. Although the *kadi* courts were permitted to function, their powers were circumscribed in that they were forbidden to handle political cases or any cases in which both parties to the dispute had not agreed to use the *kadi* rather than the parallel Soviet court system. As the Soviet courts became more accepted, criminal cases were eliminated from the *kadis'* sphere. Next, the government invited dissatisfied parties to appeal the *kadis'* decisions to a Soviet court. In this manner the Soviets earned the reputation of being partisans of the oppressed, while the *kadis* were exposed as defenders of the status quo."

After only a few years the *kadis* were forbidden to enforce any Muslim law which contradicted Soviet law. Soviet representatives attended all *kadi* proceedings and their approval was required for all court decisions. In the mid-1920s, when the *wafks* (endowment properties), which had supported the *kadis*, were expropriated and redistributed among the peasantry, the *kadis* disappeared completely.

Scandalously, in 2005 SAlt's political cothinkers in Canada, the International Socialists, supported government proposals to establish *sharia* trihunals for family law, as part of the capitalist state. Our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste actively protested against these moves. Such courts could only deepen the isolation and oppression of Muslim women (see *Spartacist Canada* No. 147, Winter 2005/2006).

Support to Counterrevolution = Support to Anti-Woman Reaction

Despite the Soviet Union's degeneration under a nationalist parasitic bureaucratic caste, which usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat in a political counterrevolution beginning in 1923-24, the proletarian collectivised property forms created by the 1917 October Revolution remained until capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. It was the elementary duty of revolutionaries to defend the gains of the revolution by fighting for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state and for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misleaders who paved the way for capitalist restoration. We apply the same program to the deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba today.

SAlt's political origins go back to the late Tony Cliff and his followers who bowed to the pressure of anti-communist Cold War hysteria during the Korean War. Capitulating to the British bourgeoisie and the then-ruling British Labour Party, they refused to defend the Soviet Union, China and North Korea against imperialist attack and broke from Trotsky's Fourth International, reneging on their revolutionary duty.

Motivated by hostility towards the Soviet Union, throughout the 1980s, as then-members of the Cliffite International Socialist Organisation, SAlt cadre supported the CIA-bankrolled Islamic Afghan *mujahedin* cutthroats against the Soviet Red Army, alongside Washington and its union-busting Hawke/Keating Labor government ally in Canberra. This was a war directly over the status of women—the tribal chiefs and mullahs went to war when the Afghan government attempted to open up education for girls and to reduce the bride price. Standing upon our unconditional military defence of the USSR, the Spartacist League took the side of social progress. We said: "Hail Red Army! Extend social gains of the October Revolution to Afghan peoples!"

Driven by their hostility to the Soviet Union, SAlt also hailed Polish clerical-reactionary, anti-woman, anti-Semitic "union" Solidarność, backed to the hilt by the CIA and the Catholic church, throughout its rise in the 1980s. When in September 1981 Solidarność came out for capitalist restoration we said: "Stop Solidarity's Counterrevolution!" Later Solidarność's program triumphed in the form of the devastating 1989 capitalist counterrevolution in Poland, which ushered in mass unemployment and the brutal rollback of women's rights, particularly abortion rights.

Weiniger's article concludes by denouncing a July 2008 Sydney demo protesting homophobia and opposition to effective birth control by the Catholic church. This demonstration, which we Spartacists attended, was called by the reformist Democratic Socialist Perspective in response to the visit of Pope Benedict during "World Youth Day," which saw hundreds of thousands of "pilgrims" descend on the city in a "celebration" of religious obscurantism. Unable to utter a word of protest against the reactionary, anti-woman Catholic church, SAlt instead are outraged that some protesters "thrust" condoms at pilgrims en route to pray at the Pope's feet, lamenting that this could only serve to "isolate" the left from these "potential allies." While SAlt wring their hands about the sensibilities of Catholic pilgrims, we Marxists say: Free contraception and abortion on demand for all! For the separation of church and state!

For a Multiracial Leninist Vanguard Party!

Religion at best serves to propagate and enshrine mind-numbing delusions, to lessen the pain of existence. Religious

continued on page 9

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Immigrants...

(continued from page 12)

non-citizens were held last year?

America's undocumented immigrants, mostly from Mexico and other parts of Latin America, do some of the dirtiest, most backbreaking, most dangerous jobs in this capitalist economy. Having no rights, these workers can be exploited by the capitalists to the limit of physical endurance, hired and fired to meet cyclical and seasonal needs. It is a testament to their militancy and class consciousness that a sizable number of these workers are union members and often involved in organizing battles. Immigrant workers, many with experience in social struggle in their countries of origin, can serve as a human bridge linking up workers in the U.S. with their class brothers and sisters internationally while at the same time breaking down the parochialism of U.S. workers. As we wrote in the International Communist League's "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

> "Modern capitalism, i.e., imperialism, reaching into all areas of the planet, in the course of the class struggle and as economic need demands, brings into the proletariat at its bottom new sources of cheaper labor, principally immigrants from poorer and less-developed regions of the world—workers with few rights who are deemed more disposable in times of economic contraction. Thus capitalism in ongoing fashion creates different strata among the workers, while simultaneously amalgamating the workers of many different lands. Everywhere, the capitalists, abetted by aristocracy-of-labor opportunists, try to poison class consciousness and solidarity among the workers by fomenting religious, national and ethnic divisions. The struggle for the unity and integrity of the working class against chauvinism and racism is thus a vital task for the proletarian vanguard."

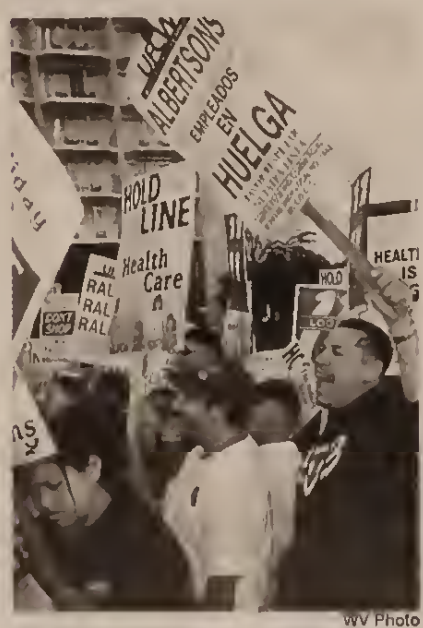
Obama's Friends in the Union Leadership

Having wooed Latino voters with promises of immigration "reform," Obama has announced his intention to give a major speech on immigration policy later this month. What he has in mind was shown at a recent town hall meeting in California, where he scolded an imaginary undocumented immigrant: "This is not going to be a free ride. It's not going to be some instant amnesty. What's going to happen is you are going to pay a significant fine. You are going to learn English."

Less than a week later, offering their services as labor police for the capitalist class, the heads of the AFL-CIO and rival Change to Win union federations unveiled a "unified framework for comprehensive immigration reform legislation." The joint press release quotes Eliseo Medina of the Service Employees International Union: "Today's unified agreement is a major step forward that will, combined with the continued leadership of President Obama, Vice President Biden and bipartisan leadership in Congress, profoundly improve the future of all workers and build a stronger American economy for our children and grandchildren."

We oppose all the bourgeoisie's anti-immigrant laws and regulations and demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants. We defend bilingual education against "English only" bigots and stand for full equality of all languages in all spheres of public life. Should anything like genuine amnesty for undocumented immigrants be proposed, we would be in favor of it, as an elementary democratic gain, though limited and partial, for immigrant workers and the proletariat as a whole. However, all the immigration "reform" proposals now being debated are a cruel hoax for undocumented immigrants and their supporters. The "unified" "reform framework" proposed by the AFL-CIO and Change to Win shows the "framework" they share with the bosses: "Rounding up and deporting the 12 million or more immigrants who are unlawfully present...is not a realistic solution." According to the union tops, any "adjustment process" to the status of undocumented immigrants "must be designed to ensure that it will not encourage future illegal immigration."

Perpetually in the political tow of the capitalist Democratic Party, the labor "leaders" now dream of "working together" with Obama in the interests of U.S. capitalism, which they falsely claim coincide with the interests of the working people. Like Ron Gettelfinger—the UAW auto union head who earlier ran to Washington along with the bosses of the Big



WV Photo

Striking UFCW grocery workers rally in Los Angeles, December 2003. Often bringing with them a history of labor militancy, immigrant workers can help revitalize the U.S. labor movement.

Three to offer every kind of rotten giveback of the UAW members' jobs, wages and conditions—today the top bureaucrats of both the AFL-CIO and Change to Win want to advise the capitalist masters on more effective ways to turn the immigration spigot on and off according to what is profitable for the bourgeoisie.

Indeed, in a 21 April editorial, "Immigration and the Unions," the *New York Times* wrote approvingly of the responsible, statesmanlike posture of the union bureaucrats toward government immigration policy. The union bureaucrats see no fundamental conflict of interests between labor and capital. But there is a contradiction between their reactionary ideology—premised on promotion of U.S. imperialist interests abroad and defense of the profits of American capitalists at home—and the fact that they sit atop mass organizations of the proletariat. Thus they want to be seen as fighting for immigrant workers, an increasingly crucial component of the unions' membership.

Mitchell/WBEZ

Workers occupy Republic Windows plant in Chicago last December. After sit-in lasting six days, the largely immigrant and black workers won their demand for severance pay.

The AFL-CIO first shifted its stance on immigration in 2000, in response to the fact that a section of the bourgeoisie was dependent on low-cost immigrant labor and to the fact that their own dues base was shrinking. In 2003, they launched a so-called "immigrant workers freedom ride," whose purpose was to build support for the Democrats. After the mass 2006 May Day demonstrations, the two federations offered competing class-collaborationist "reform" proposals. Their latest plan is more of the same—it accepts that immigration must be controlled and the border sealed off. To regulate immigration they urge an "independent commission that can assess labor market needs on an ongoing basis," leaving open the possibility of themselves participating directly in such a commission as an adjunct to the repressive forces of the capitalist state. The bureaucrats' sought-after partnership with the state also finds expression in efforts to organize cops, prison guards and border agents, who are paid to repress working people, immigrants and minorities and have no place in the labor movement. Indeed, the joint statement opines that "border security is clearly very important, but not sufficient"!

The labor bureaucrats' joint plan accepts and defends the capitalist profit system, aspiring to "build a stronger American economy" and "encourage just and humane economic integration." While the joint plan has dropped Change to Win's earlier support for expanding the "guest worker" programs, it calls to "improve the administration of existing temporary worker programs." These programs are the modern equivalent of indentured servitude, tying immigrants' visas directly to their employers. The joint plan is designed to reduce immigration during times of high unemployment, while its "worker authorization mechanism" reads like an expanded TWIC proposal (see article, page 4). Written from the viewpoint of what is best for U.S. imperialism, the proposal is shot through with chauvinist language about "our nation's values," which goes hand in hand with "America first" protectionism—the policy of allying with one's "own" government to intervene against foreign competitors and "save" national industry.

The bureaucrats' ties to the Democratic Party have long served to chain the working class to its exploiters and preserve the rule of racist American capitalism. What is necessary is a political struggle within the union movement against the craven, pro-capitalist policies of the bureaucratic tops and the forging of a class-struggle union leadership. This is part of the struggle to forge a workers party that fights for a workers government. ***Break with the Democrats! For a revolutionary workers party!***

Reform vs. Revolution

The fundamental dividing line between us and the rest of the left is program: reform or revolution. The reformists acquiesce to what is "possible" and practical under capitalism. They grotesquely hailed the election of Obama as a "triumph for the Black masses and all the oppressed," as *Workers World* (20 November 2008) put it. Now, they are seeking to pressure Obama to do "right" by immigrants. In March, the liberal Southern California Immigration Coalition (SCIC), which includes the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Freedom Socialist Party and Workers World Party's (WWP) Bail Out the People Movement, held a pro-Democratic Party demonstration in Los Angeles. The call to action carried the slogans "Ayer Votamos y Hoy Marchamos [Yesterday We Voted and Today We March]! Full Legalization NOW! Stop the ICE Raids! YES WE CAN!" and included a picture of Obama with the caption, "Hope." The leaflet proclaimed, "Let's hold Obama accountable!" According to

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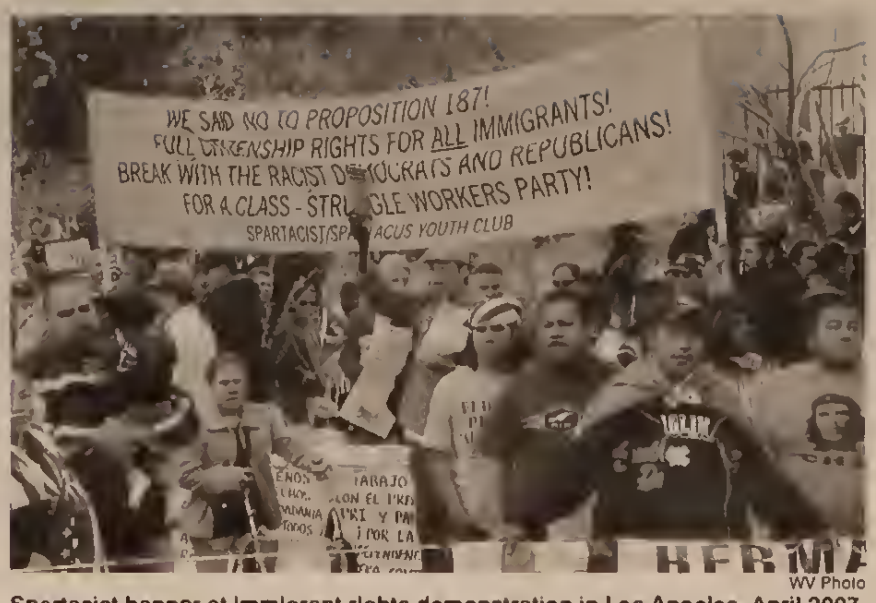
a report on WWP's Web site (April 24), the SCIC plans "to draft a more progressive counterproposal than those that are curreutly being introduced in Congress." Not to be outdone, the ISO gushes over a similar meeting in the Bay Area to create "an alternative to the 'mainstream' version of comprehensive immigration reform" (*Socialist Worker*, 15 April).

The reformists seek to pressure the Democrats to adopt more "enlightened" policies. Ours is a fundamentally different purpose: to build a workers party that fights for a socialist revolution to expropriate the capitalist class and establish a workers state with a planned, collectivized economy. For us Marxists, the question of immigrant rights is a political question, not an economic one determined by the boom-bust cycles of the capitalist economy. As we wrote in "How the Fake Left Amnesties the Democrats" (*WV* No. 873, 7 July 2006):

> "Our aim in intervening on behalf of immigrants, both at the massive demonstrations and within the working class, is to win workers to the understanding that they must oppose the whole capitalist system. We do not seek to tinker with the system, looking for an alternative immigration policy. We will support such reforms as are offered. But, our bottom line is that we will worry about the ebbs and flows of the world economy when the proletariat under revolutionary leadership runs it. We are not responsible for, nor do we seek to advise, the bourgeoisie on its immigration or other policies. We seek to organize the social power of the proletariat to smash this system and establish proletarian rule."



WV Photo

Spartacist banner at immigrant rights demonstration in Los Angeles, April 2007.

For a Class-Struggle Fight for Immigrant Rights!

Amid the protectionist uproar pushed by the Teamsters bureaucracy (and their claims of "unsafe" Mexican trucking), Obama and the Democratic Congress passed legislation in March that killed a 2007 pilot project that had allowed some 100 Mexican trucks to travel in the U.S. to deliver their goods. In fact, what is happening in this country—mass layoffs and unemployment and increasing protectionism and chauvinism by the union bureaucrats—can also be seen in virtually all major capitalist countries. East European workers are returning home in droves from West Europe, while in Japan the government is literally paying immigrants to permanently leave. Meanwhile, violent attacks against immigrants have become more prevalent in the U.S., West Europe and South Africa. Earlier this year, British construction workers staged a series of reactionary, protectionist strikes against foreign workers calling for "British jobs for British workers." Our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain opposed these strikes, calling instead for "Jobs for all! Full union pay for all work at the prevailing rate, no matter who does the job! Unions must defend immigrant workers!" (See "Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!" *WV* No. 930, 13 February.)

There can be no compromise between the internationalist program that the proletariat requires to fight for power—and even to wage defensive struggles in the imperialist epoch—and the acceptance of the national chauvinism that splits the working class, breeds anti-immigrant bigotry and serves only the bourgeois masters. The international character of the working class gives it potentially enormous power, if mobilized across national and other divisions, to coordinate its struggles. The existence of numerous plants in Mexico owned by U.S. corporations poses the possibility and necessity of joint labor action by workers on both sides of the border. This is exactly what the union bureaucrats refuse to do out of loyalty to the capitalist system. A class-struggle strategy, in stark contrast, means mobilizing the unions' social power to fight for the desperate needs of the working and poor masses independently of and against the interests of the national bourgeoisie.

To the U.S. capitalists, Mexico and other countries are a vast reservoir of cheap labor to be tapped, including to drive down wages in the U.S. for all workers. Defense of immigrant rights is thus crucial to reversing the decades-long decline of the trade unions. Against the capitalists' attempts to use undocumented immigrant workers as a club against unions, we call on the unions to fight deportations and I.C.E. workplace raids through class-struggle means and to organize the foreign-born into the unions with full rights and protections. The bosses seek to pit workers against each other in competition for a limited pool of jobs in order to divide and weaken the labor movement. The only way to fight unemployment is through united working-class struggle to demand jobs for all, a shorter workweek with no loss in pay and a sliding scale of wages to offset inflation. This poses a fight against the whole capitalist system—for socialist revolution in the U.S., Mexico and throughout the Americas.

Opposition to anti-immigrant racism in the U.S. also is directly intertwined with the struggle against black oppression, the cornerstone of American capitalism. It is particularly important to combat anti-immigrant chauvinism among U.S.-born black and white workers, while immigrant workers must understand that anti-black racism remains the touchstone of social reaction in the U.S. This is the key to organizing the open shop South, where the racist color bar has historically been used to keep black people down and trade unions out. The importance of working-class unity in struggle was shown by the organizing victory in the Smithfield Foods pork processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, in December 2008. For years, management attempted to inflame racial and ethnic divisions. If black and immigrant workers had not worked together, the organizing effort would have fallen apart.

For the capitalists, immigrants are an easy target, especially at times of severe economic crisis. During the mass unemployment of the 1930s Great Depression, nearly half a million Mexicans from the U.S. Southwest, including people who had U.S. citizenship, were deported. During the same period in France, the number of foreign workers—mainly Italians, Poles and Algerians—was reduced by half a million, equal to 5 percent of the total labor force. Some left because they couldn't find jobs, but many were rounded up and deported.

At the same time, there is also a long history of international working-class solidarity in the labor movement. The International Workingmen's Association (also known as the First International), an alliance of representatives of different working-class political tendencies, was founded in 1864 following discussions between British and French workers concerned with the use of foreign workers to break strikes. Karl Marx would quickly become the preeminent figure in the International's General Council. In 1866, the First International prevented an attempt by London master tailors, who were big capitalists, to replace journeymen tailors in London by recruiting journeymen in France, Belgium and Switzerland. Marx noted that as a result of these efforts, "the London masters' manoeuvre was foiled; they had to surrender and meet their workers' just demands" ("A Warning," 4 May 1866). We stand on the program of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who raised the call, "Workers of the world, unite!"■

Marxism and Religion...

(continued from page 7)

institutions help enforce the worst prejudices, oppression of women, and subjugation of youth and, along with the institution of the family, serve as a prop for the capitalist system of private property. Often, where material want is greatest, such as societies based on subsistence agriculture, organised religion exercises a monopoly over social welfare. For example, Catholic medical centres throughout regions of Africa, Asia and South America are often the sole provider of healthcare services, but they use their resources to implement the Vatican's prohibition of the use of condoms, an elementary public health measure in societies ravaged by AIDS. The historic task of the international working class is to make the productive resources of the world available to all, based on need, not profit. Only worldwide proletarian revolution can lay the basis for the end of material want, the foundation of religious superstition.

The Marxist program aims at the eradication of religion, not by force of arms or law, but scientific mastery of nature. This is not a recipe to tolerate ignorance or superstition, but on the contrary an obligation to actively expose and refute religion as an obstacle to the satisfaction of human needs. As Lenin wrote:

> "The dialecticat materialism of Marx and Engels...applies the materialist philosophy to the domain of history.... We must combat religion—that is the ABC of all materialism, and consequently of Marxism. But Marxism is not a materialism which has stopped at the ABC. Marxism goes further. It says: We must ***know how*** to combat religion, and in order to do so we must explain the source of faith and religion among the masses ***in a materialist way***."
>
> —"The Attitude of the Workers Party to Religion" (1909)

It will take a proletarian revolution to smash the power of capital and open the road to the egalitarian socialist society based on the material abundance needed to sweep away the basis of religion. This requires the building of a Leninist vanguard party which can lead the working class at the head of all the oppressed. Its cadres will be the most advanced fighters, including in defence of science and in opposition to religious superstition. Lenin explained:

> "So far as the Party of the socialist proletariat is concerned, religion is not a private affair. Our Party is an association of class-conscious, advanced fighters for the emancipation of the working class. Such an association cannot and must not be indifferent to lack of class-consciousness, ignorance or obscurantism in the shape of religious beliefs."
>
> —"Socialism and Religion" (1905)

This Leninist perspective stands diametrically opposed to SAlt's accommodation to organised religious movements as allies-in-waiting.

Addressing the French public in 1767, Voltaire wrote, "Anyone who has the power to make you believe absurdities has the power to make you commit injustices." SAlt oppose Marx's program, not out of ignorance, but as a consequence of *their* anti-communist program, which rejects the Marxist principle that *only* the working class has both the interest and the social power to overthrow capitalism and build a classless society.

The Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Club are dedicated to freeing the oppressed from religion's yoke. As we say in the article "Marxism and Religion," reprinted in our pamphlet *Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism*:

> "In order to win over a new generation to the struggle for socialism, based on a materialist conception of society, socialists must ceaselessly combat religion and other forms of idealism which look to the supernatural, explaining that freedom from oppression lies in this world, not another."■

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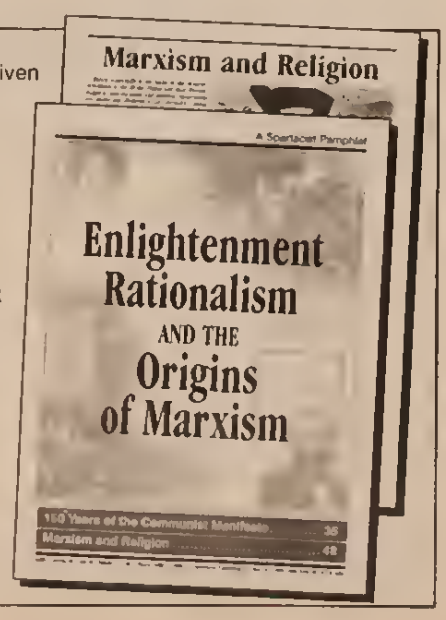

Torture...

(continued from page 1)

acts back behind closed doors, Obama seeks to return to the bourgeois norm.

Obama's "War on Terror"

Obama has been showered with praise for his vow to close the U.S. prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, within a year. But in reality, the Obama administration is simply continuing the Bush regime's policies under a different name, with the "war on terror" now branded "Overseas Contingency Operations." Significantly, the Obama administration has endorsed indefinite detention, a hallmark of police-state dictatorships and the centerpiece of Bush's war on democratic rights. Many of the Guantánamo detainees will not be released—they will be transferred to detention centers in Bagram, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Meanwhile, the Obama government invoked the long-standing legal doctrine of "state secrets," a favorite of the Bush regime, to quash a lawsuit brought against a Boeing subsidiary by victims of the CIA's policy of "extraordinary rendition," in which the U.S. transfers prisoners to countries where torture has always been openly practiced.

At least 112 people are known to have died in U.S. custody (the actual number is doubtless much higher), including at least eleven who were killed through blunt trauma or asphyxiation. One of those was an Afghan man named Dilawar—depicted in the powerful 2007 documentary "Taxi to the Dark Side"—who died after having been beaten so badly by U.S. forces in Bagram that his legs were "pulpified." For his part, Obama is doubling the size of the Bagram prison, where more than 600 detainees are already confined. And when a federal court judge last month granted *habeas corpus* rights to a handful of prisoners in Bagram, the Obama administration appealed the ruling, arguing, just as the Bush regime had before, that the courts had no jurisdiction over these prisoners. We say: ***Free all the detainees!***

Since its launch, the "war on terror" has served as a pretext for imperialist intervention abroad, and it is no different today. The bloody U.S. occupation of Iraq continues while at least 21,000 more U.S. troops are being shipped to Afghanistan to holster the 40,000 already there. In Pakistan, over 700 people have been slaughtered by U.S. drone attacks, with some 150 having been killed since Obama took office. ***U.S. out of Iraq and Afghanistan! Hands off Pakistan!***

Democratic Party politicians were up to their necks in helping to set up the Bush administration's torture program. In September 2002, top Republican and Democratic Congressmen, including current House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, were given a "virtual tour" of CIA detention sites that included descriptions of waterboarding and other "enhanced interrogation" methods. As Mark Danner, a professor of journalism at UC Berkeley, wrote in the *New York Review of Books* (9 April): "The US Congress, already in possession of a great deal of information about the torture conducted by the administration ...passed the Military Commissions Act of 2006 and in so doing attempted to protect those responsible from criminal penalty under the War Crimes Act. Democrats, who could have filibustered the bill, declined to do so." Now, after initially promising to do away with Bush's "military commission" kangaroo courts for Guantánamo prisoners, the Obama administration says that it may rely on them after all in order to be able to secure convictions by using hearsay and evidence obtained under torture.

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UPI

Washington Post

U.S. imperialism's legacy of torture and slaughter. Drawing depicts atrocities during U.S. occupation of Philippines following 1898 Spanish-American War (right). Viet Cong fighter being waterboarded by U.S. soldiers during Vietnam War (below). At Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, U.S. prison guard Charles Graner brutalizes detainees (below, right).

Louisiana Weekly

Prisoner peers out from cell in Louisiana's notorious Angola state prison, a former slave plantation—not so former.

It isn't just foreign "terror suspects" who have been subjected to torture. In 2002, Jose Padilla, an American citizen, was picked up at Chicago's O'Hare airport, declared an "enemy combatant" and disappeared into a Navy brig in South Carolina. In 2003 and 2004, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee filed *amici curiae* (friends of the court) briefs against Padilla's indefinite detention. When charges were finally brought against Padilla in November 2005, his lawyers revealed that for three years and eight months he had been tortured by extreme sensory deprivation—the windows of his tiny nine-by-seven-foot cell were blacked out, and he could only leave his cell wearing blinkered goggles and headphones. This was punctuated by blasts of harsh light and loud, pounding noise. A motion filed by Padilla's lawyers in 2006 described that Padilla was "hooded and forced to stand in stress positions for long durations of time" and "threatened with imminent execution." He was also injected with drugs believed to be LSD or PCP. Nonetheless, Padilla was convicted in a show trial and sentenced to 17 years and four months in prison. ***Free Jose Padilla now!***

The defense brief for the modern-day Torquemadas has already been written by the *New York Times*. In a 22 April article, the *Times* claimed that in 2002 the Bush administration united around a program of "brutal methods of interrogation." "This extraordinary consensus was possible," according to the *Times*, "because no one involved...investigated the gruesome origins of the techniques they were approving." The supposed "origins"? With consummate hypocrisy, the *Times* announces: "Government studies in the 1950s found that Chinese Communist interrogators had produced false confessions from captured American pilots not with some kind of sinister 'brainwashing' but with crude tactics," which the *Times* claims were the basis for the Bush administration's torture program. According to the anti-Communist, pro-imperialist mouthpieces of the *Times*, the criminals, torturers and murderers during the 1950-53 Korean War were not the U.S. imperialists who invaded the peninsula, reducing it to rubble and slaughtering some *three million* people, but the courageous Chinese and Korean Communists who fought to expel them. This comes from the same newspaper whose "embedded" reporter, Judith Miller, was in the forefront of selling the government's "weapons of mass destruction" lies to justify the invasion of Iraq.

To be sure, it is a measure of how degenerate U.S. bourgeois society is that the "value" of torture is now publicly debated in the press, with many pundits and politicians openly justifying the inhuman treatment of humans. With Orwellian doublespeak, the *Times* calls torture "harsh interrogation techniques" and describes waterboarding as "simulated drowning" (there is nothing "simulated" about it). Mark Danner, in a 30 April piece in the *New York Review of Books*, advises that "what is needed" is a "broadly persuasive judgment...on whether or not torture made Americans safer. This is the only way we can begin to come to a true consensus about torture." Even supposed "Marxists" have weighed in with their own "judgment." In a 24 April article on its Web site, the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) grotesquely advises the bourgeoisie that the recently released memos "suggest" that torture is "largely useless."

The torture and brutality meted out to America's victims abroad finds its reflection in the horrific treatment of the more than two million human beings locked up in America's prisons. It is no accident that Charles Graner, one of the sadistic torturers at Abu Ghraib, had been a prison guard in the U.S. A powerful article by Atul Gawande in the *New Yorker* (30 March) reports that by the end of the 1990s there were some 60 "supermax" prisons in the U.S. holding at least 25,000 inmates in total isolation, itself a form of torture. Gawande documents the chilling effects of extended solitary confinement and consequent sensory deprivation on prisoners, who are, in effect, deliberately driven mad.

Human beings should not be treated like beasts. We communists denounce torture, imperialist war and repression as barbaric. Our goal is the liberation of the working class and all humanity, and we repudiate such methods—as did the Bolshevik leaders of the October Revolution of 1917, in which Marxism has found its highest expression in practice thus far. It was with the aim of ridding the world of capitalist barbarism that the Bolshevik Party led that successful workers revolution, and that is the reason why bourgeois rulers everywhere, backed by their social-democratic hangers-on, despise the October Revolution and the Soviet workers state it created. As we wrote in "U.S. Torture Machine" (*WV* No. 863, 3 February 2006):

> "The world bourgeoisies and their mouthpieces loathe the fact that Lenin and the Bolsheviks applied the measures not only necessary to attain state power but essential to defend and consolidate working-class rule. In the name of 'democracy,' the capitalist powers subjected the Russian Revolution not merely to the hammer and tongs of military encirclement and invasion, provocations and isolation, but to mountains of slander as well."

That article explained that even in the heat of the brutal Civil War that followed the October Revolution, the Soviet Cheka (Extraordinary Commission to Combat

South Africa...

(continued from page 3)

and doctors alike underscore the need for one union for all medical employees, from doctors to orderlies to cleaners.

Due to atrocious conditions and meager pay, there are more South African doctors working outside the country than in the public sector at home. Every year, doctors and nurses leave the public health system in droves for the private sector, where surgeons, for example, make *eight times* the salary of government surgeons. There are 4,000 unfilled doctors' positions in public hospitals, while the nursing shortage is around 40,000. In rural areas the doctor-to-patient ratio is as low as three for every 100,000 people.

Junior doctors and interns describe working 80-hour weeks, with 10-to-14-day work cycles, in massively overcrowded hospitals where many of the sick have to return home without treatment after waiting long hours. Doctors at the Red Cross Children's Hospital in Cape Town have taken to wearing black to protest the fact that sick children wait up to 12 hours to see a doctor. While much of the bourgeois media denounced the strike, even as it feigned sympathy for the doctors' plight, a Johannesburg *Star* (30 April) editorial stated: "Government doctors believed they had a point in striking that went beyond the demand for a pay rise, and we cannot disagree."

In an attempt to whip up public anger against the strike, government spokesmen accused the doctors of "endangering lives." This from a government that under former president Thabo Mbeki denied that HIV causes AIDS and held back the provision of antiretroviral medication (ARVs) to the sick, causing the needless deaths of an estimated 300,000-plus people. The AIDS pandemic has hit South African women particularly hard, with the largest cohort of AIDS sufferers being women in their 20s. The government's criminal policies on AIDS also helped spur the spread of tuberculosis, including its drug-resistant strains, throughout the population.

Spartacist

Nurses during 1995 wildcat strike carried signs reading "Away with Mandela," as a number of SACP/COSATU bureaucrats branded their action a "counter-revolutionary strike." Eastern Cape government fired 6,000 nurses after strike.

The government eventually discarded its AIDS denialism and began rolling out ARVs, which has saved untold numbers of lives while also allowing the implementation of programs to prevent the transmission of HIV to newborns from their mothers. But the lack of government funding and the abject condition of public health infrastructure leave most with no access to such drugs. Only 34 percent of those requiring ARVs in 2007 actually received them. Last November the Free State province announced a "moratorium" on giving ARVs to new patients because it had run out of money, leading to some 30 deaths per day over several months. This decrepit system is overseen by the strikebreaking health minister Barbara Hogan, who is held up as a hero by the ANC-loyal Treatment Action Campaign and others who opposed Mbeki's AIDS denialism. We demand free ARVs for all who need them, *now*!

A stark measure of the enduring racial divide under neo-apartheid capitalism is the contrast between the relatively efficient, state-of-the-art private health facilities available to the people who can afford them, mainly whites, and the minimal, crumbling, dangerous public facilities that most of the black and Coloured (mixed-race) population relies on. According to a Human Rights Commission report, the private health care sector spends R43 billion servicing seven million people while the public sector spends R33.2 billion on *38 million* people. Meanwhile, the government reinforces superstitious beliefs by legitimizing "traditional healers" and helping to subsidize tribal kings and chiefs. The inaccessibility of decent health care for poor people leaves them with nowhere to turn but to dangerous quack "remedies," including for AIDS. As part of the struggle for genuine social equality, we call for nationalizing the private hospitals and clinics and for massive investment in health care in the townships and rural areas.

How cheap black life is still held in the "new" South Africa can be seen in the Eastern Cape, where hospitals with overflowing morgues have been handing stillborn babies over to their mothers in cardboard boxes, telling them that there is a new rule that they need to bury the remains themselves (Johannesburg *Times*, 19 April). Last month newspapers reported the story of Ntombizodwa Mali, a Western Cape woman who was turned away by three clinics when she sought treatment for her critically ill one-year-old grandson. He died as she carried him on her back, having walked for hours to reach the clinics. Local ANC politicians took advantage of the tragedy to campaign for votes at the baby's funeral (!), promising they would "investigate" why the clinics turned her away. Mali later said in disgust, "The only time we see politicians is during election time; they promise us all sorts of things, after that we never see them again."

At the root of the masses' miserable living conditions—mass unemployment, homelessness, poverty, cop violence, hellish "health care"—is a capitalist economic system that continues to be based on superexploited, mainly black labor and white privilege. The SACP and COSATU misleaders politically chain the workers and poor to this murderous system through their ties to the bourgeois ANC, which they falsely portray as the embodiment of national liberation.

Spartacist South Africa fights to break the proletariat and oppressed masses from the Tripartite Alliance and to forge a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead the struggle for socialist revolution—for a ***black-centered workers government***. This is the only way to open the road to genuine social and national emancipation. As we wrote in "South African Elections: No Choice for Workers, Poor" (*WV* No. 933, 27 March): "The neo-apartheid capitalist state must be smashed and replaced with a workers state that expropriates the banks, mines and factories and creates a planned economy where production is for social use, not private profit." Under the rule of the working class—extending throughout southern Africa and into the advanced capitalist countries of North America, Europe and Japan—the world's scientific and industrial resources will be used to build a decent life for all and the scourges of poverty, hunger and criminal medical neglect will be seen as the relics of a barbaric past. ■

Counterrevolution and Sabotage) issued instructions that "any verbal abuse, rudeness, injustice or impropriety" shown toward the incarcerated "is a blot upon the Soviet power" and raised the call: "No tortures and torments!"

Obama's "Socialists"

One liberal pundit after another, concerned that American "democracy" has been tarnished by Bush's open program of torture, has demanded "independent" investigations and possible prosecutions. Such liberal outrage has been echoed by the reformist left, who now see in Obama a "friend" who can be pressured to do what is right. In fact, Obama is a Wall Street Democrat who bails out the banks while busting unions, who administers imperialist war and occupation abroad and carries out class war against the workers and oppressed at home.

Woodcut from *Praxis Rerum Criminalium*

16th-century depiction of water torture in West Europe.

In an article titled, "Will Bush Gang Be Prosecuted for Torture?" (*Workers World*, 30 April), the Workers World Party (WWP) states: "There would be widespread support here and worldwide for prosecuting Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and company for their many war crimes, including the torture of prisoners." A 24 April article on the ISO's Web site by Jeremy Scahill, author of *Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army*, demands: "What is actually needed is an independent prosecutor—someone like [U.S. Attorney] Patrick Fitzgerald—to treat this as the major-league, far-reaching crime investigation that it should be seen as."

Scahill's piece, which the ISO printed without comment, concludes by referring readers to an online petition that states in part: "We urge Attorney General Eric Holder to appoint a non-partisan independent Special Counsel to immediately commence a prosecutorial investigation into the most serious alleged crimes" of the Bush regime. The petition even advises that prosecutions would not be "extraordinarily lengthy or costly" because "substantial evidence of the crimes is already in the public domain"! The petition was signed by various Democrats and Greens and the ANSWER Coalition, which is led by PSL, and the World Can't Wait (WCW) outfit, which was initiated by the Revolutionary Communist Party. Indeed, WCW complained in a 24 April headline on its Web site: "Bush Memos Reveal Policy of Cruelty: Obama Refuses to Enforce the Law."

The reformist left promotes the illusion that imperialist militarism is merely a bad policy that can be eliminated from the capitalist system if sufficient pressure is applied. But the drive toward war and repression is as inextricably rooted in the capitalist system as the drive to increase profit. Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, marked by the domination of the globe by a small, exclusive club of the capitalist great powers that lord it over the weaker, dependent nations. No amount of pressure can transform the nature of capitalist imperialism.

The reformist "socialists" stand in opposition to the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. The truth is that the victims, at home and abroad, of the U.S. capitalist state will never know justice until capitalist rule is overthrown through socialist revolution. Only then can the imperialist war criminals and sadistic torturers be tried by their victims.

A 17 April press release by WCW stated: "Your government refuses to bring war criminals and torturers to account. Will you remain silent or get informed, take a stand and build a movement to stop torture and demand accountability for war crimes?" This is *not* "our" government, it is not the government of America's working people and the oppressed. The capitalist state exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie against those they exploit and oppress, and in carrying out torture, war and repression, the capitalist state is doing exactly what it is supposed to do. The capitalist state, which at its core consists of the cops, prisons and military, must be shattered through a socialist revolution and replaced with a workers state in which those who labor rule. This perspective demands the building of a workers party—independent of and opposed to both the Democratic and Republican parties of capital—to lead the struggle for workers power. ■

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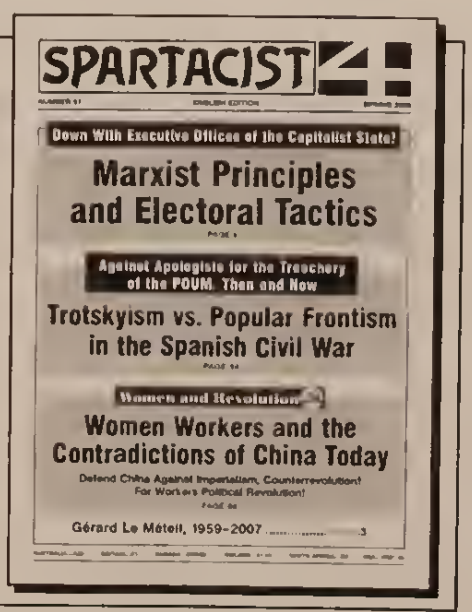

WORKERS VANGUARD

Labor Tops Offer to Help Bosses Control Immigration

Economic Crisis: Immigrants Under the Gun

Lenny Ignelzi

Getty

Left: Obama's Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano touring the Otay Mesa port of entry in Southern California in early April. Right: Men seized as they tried to cross U.S.-Mexican border languish in Arizona holding cell.

No Deportations! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

With the economy spiraling downward, immigrants in America face rising unemployment and state repression as the capitalist rulers seek to deflect social discontent by scapegoating immigrant workers for capitalism's crisis. The ongoing crackdown against the 12 million so-called "illegal" immigrants who live here has resulted in deportation of hundreds of thousands of people and fueled a rising tide of racist chauvinism. Now, signaling their commitment to stepped-up immigration enforcement, President Barack Obama and the Congressional Democrats approved more money and personnel for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E., the hated *la migra*) in February. There is even a proposal for the Border Patrol to spray stretches of the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo riverbank with a poisonous defoliant, raising memories of the use of Agent Orange in Vietnam.

Fewer immigrants today are coming to the U.S. and those who do are finding fewer jobs. Remittances to Mexico fell in 2008 for the first time on record, declining 3.6 percent, part of a worldwide trend as immigrants from developing countries lose jobs. In 2008, the number of Latino immigrants employed or seeking work in the U.S. fell for the first time since 2003. In the face of the all-around misery being inflicted on working people by the workings of the capitalist economy, trade-union tops have responded to layoffs by supporting poisonous protectionist measures, including the "buy American" clause in Obama's "rescue" package for American industry, and thereby helped to drive a wedge between native-born and foreign-born workers.

Over the past decade the U.S. has more than doubled the personnel patrolling the border while funding for border "security" has been nearly tripled. At the end of March, in the name of fighting "drug violence" in Mexico, the Obama administration laid out a sweeping plan to further militarize the border, including the possible mobilization of National Guard troops. Right before Obama's first trip to Mexico, Alan Bersin was tapped to fill the post of "border czar"; while working for the Clinton White House, Bersin implemented "Operation Gatekeeper," with its 12-foot-high walls sealing off San Diego from the Mexican border. Down with the racist "war on drugs"!

Last year, I.C.E. carried out two of the largest immigration raids in U.S. history against individual factories. Now the Obama administration plans to widen the scope of such raids by carrying out undercover investigations and audits of employer records, supposedly so it can prosecute employers who "knowingly" hire undocumented workers, on top of rounding up thousands upon thousands more immigrants. Meanwhile Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano has directed agents to apply greater "scrutiny" to the selection and investigation of targets as well as the timing of raids. As governor of Arizona, Napolitano empowered local law enforcement, including Maricopa County sheriff Joe Arpaio, notorious for his use of chain gangs, to terrorize immigrants.

In February, President Obama signed off on a stimulus package that explicitly requires recipients of bailout funds to hire "Americans" over foreigners with special visas, known as H-1Bs. Bank of America and Merrill Lynch, among others, have said that provision led them to rescind job offers to some graduating foreign students. In addition, the federal government is now cracking down on supposed violations of the visa program. In February, federal agents arrested eleven people in California and five other states on charges of H-1B visa fraud. Legislation that would impose similar restrictions on all U.S. employers is expected to be introduced in Congress this month.

It is in the urgent interest of the labor movement to mobilize in defense of immigrant workers, who form a key and vibrant component of the U.S. working class. The social power of the union movement must be mobilized to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants! ***Down with the I.C.E. raids! No deportations!*** But instead of championing these elementary measures of self-defense against increasing exploitation and union-busting, the patriotic misleaders of the AFL-CIO and Change to Win union federations have just put forward a joint "framework" for immigration "reform," asking for greater partnership in tinkering with the bourgeoisie's mechanisms for capitalist profiteering and anti-immigrant repression.

While Obama looks for a "human rights" bonanza with his ballyhooed plan to close Guantánamo (while seeking to transfer most of its helpless, tortured, incommunicado prisoners to other facilities), the construction of new federal detention centers for immigrants continues unabated; a new facility is slated for the Los Angeles area that will hold up to 2,200 immigrants. In the meantime, I.C.E. is holding L.A.-area detainees in the basement of the downtown Federal Building in overcrowded, filthy conditions. According to a lawsuit filed by the ACLU, detainees are forced to sleep on the floor, there is no access to medical care, and rights such as access to mail and one's attorney are routinely violated. In immigration court, even permanent residents don't have to be proven "guilty beyond a reasonable doubt" and can be deported for the same alleged crimes they were already acquitted of in criminal court. A statistical reflection of the legal persecution of immigrants is the fact that Latinos now constitute by far the largest number of those sentenced in federal courts—a whopping 40 percent in 2007.

On April 3, the *New York Times* wrote about the death of Ahmad Tanveer, an immigrant detainee from Pakistan held in the Monmouth County Correctional Institute in New Jersey. Tanveer died in custody under mysterious circumstances on 9 September 2005 and I.C.E. never even reported his death. Another detainee wrote a letter to a local group that corresponds with inmates, describing Tanveer's chest pains and pleas for medical attention that went unheeded. Who is to say how many more detainees have died, unnamed and unaccounted for, in the detention hellholes, where half a million

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WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

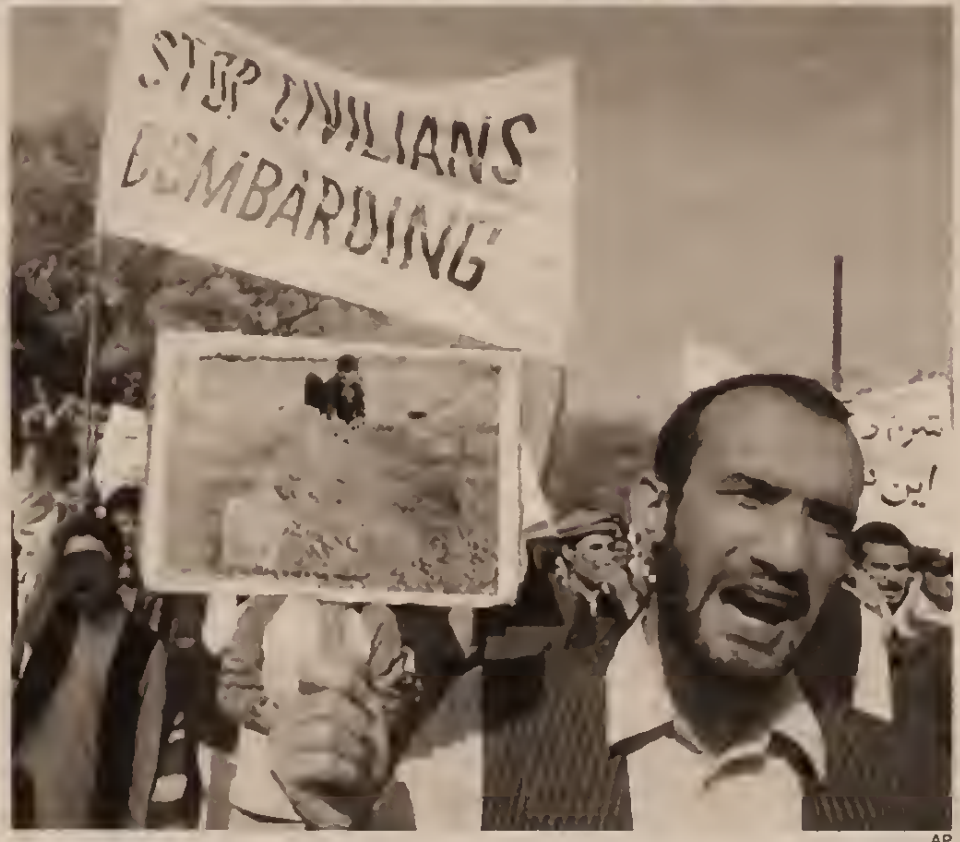
No. 937 — GCU C-701 — 22 May 2009

Pakistan: Hundreds Killed by U.S. Air Attacks

U.S./NATO Imperialists Out of Afghanistan!

Reuters

AP



AP

Top left: Barack Obama, flanked by Afghan president Hamid Karzai (left) and Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari (right) on May 6, days after U.S. bombing in Bala Baluk district of Farah Province, Afghanistan. Top right: Young victim of that murderous assault. Above: Protest at Kabul University condemns May 4 U.S. air strike in which nearly 150 civilians were slaughtered.

On the evening of May 4 in western Afghanistan, after Taliban forces had attacked local police in the village of Granai and then largely withdrawn from the town, U.S. bombers inflicted ruthless collective punishment on the helpless villagers. As many as 147 people—including approximately 95 children—perished in the airstrikes. It was the deadliest massacre of civilians by U.S./NATO forces in a long succession of indiscriminate bombings and military assaults since the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan began in 2001. One resident of Granai interviewed by the *New York Times* (7 May) described body parts littering the landscape. "It would scare a man if he saw it in a dream," he declared.

This latest slaughter of civilians by U.S. forces, which will surely stiffen the growing opposition among the Afghan population to the U.S./NATO occupation forces, comes as President Barack Obama is escalating the U.S. intervention by sending 21,000 more troops to Afghanistan. One consequence can be predicted with certainty: ever greater butchery of the Afghan population by U.S. military forces. The United Nations estimated that last year alone more than 2,000 Afghans were killed.

A single U.S. airstrike last August on the village of Azizabad in western Afghanistan killed at least 90 civilians. Following that massacre, the conservative London *Economist* (30 August 2008) wrote: "If America fails in Afghanistan, as it might, it will be remembered there for killing children." Naturally, the haughty mouthpiece of British finance capital did *not* add: "...as the British imperialists are remembered by their victims from Northern Ireland to Kenya and the Indian subcontinent."

What the U.S. rulers and their media mouthpieces genteelly term "counter-insurgency" consists of an endless succession of terror bombings, death squad assassinations and unrelenting slaughter of entire populations. This is inherent in the nature of imperialism, the stage of capitalism in which a handful of advanced capitalist powers compete globally for control of markets, raw materials and access to cheap labor. Today, after eight years of the demented regime of George Bush, which reveled in its barbarity, Obama is well suited to help refurbish U.S. imperialism's tarnished image around the world. Yet whether the Commander-in-Chief is a Democrat or Republican, war crimes and atrocities against civilians are always integral to U.S. imperialism's wars of conquest and occupation, from the Philippines at the dawn of the 20th century to Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan today.

In Pakistan, Obama has stepped up missile attacks by unmanned drone airplanes—with the tacit approval of Islamabad—in Pakistan's northwestern tribal areas. Citing Pakistani press reports, *Los Angeles Times* columnist Doyle McManus reported (3 May) that these missile strikes have killed about 160 people since Obama's inauguration. According to the Karachi daily *The Nation* (14 April), U.S. drone attacks in Pakistan between 16 January 2006 and 8 April 2009 killed a total of 701 people. Of these attacks, "only 10 were able to hit their actual targets, killing 14 wanted Al-Qaeda leaders, besides perishing 687 innocent Pakistani civilians."

The drone missile attacks have contributed to the growing instability of nuclear-armed Pakistan. The *New York Times* (14 April) reported: "As American drone attacks disrupt strongholds of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in the tribal areas, the insurgents are striking deeper into Pakistan—both in retaliation and in search of new havens." A former "counterinsurgency" adviser to the U.S. command in Iraq warned Congress that the "highly unpopular" drone strikes are "leading us to loss of Pakistani government control over its own population" (*Los Angeles Times*, 3 May). Besides, he said, "there are other ways to do it." This was a veiled reference to the widespread use in Iraq and Afghanistan of "counter-insurgency" commando teams acting as covert death squads to assassinate suspected insurgents.

The U.S. imperialists are intervening militarily in Pakistan to support their client regime against fundamentalists seeking its removal and to head off cross-border attacks on U.S./NATO forces in Afghanistan. The client itself—faced

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French Caribbean Colonies Shaken by General Strikes

Page 4

On "Community Control" of Police

Los Angeles
7 May 2009

With the lead article of *WV* No. 935 (24 April) "Racist Police Terror U.S.A.," I wanted to raise a question. Under the subhead "'Community Control of the Police'—A Liberal Hoax," it strikes me as odd to introduce the statement: "Even if it could be accomplished, black 'control' of the inner cities would not put an end to endemic poverty, joblessness, crime, gutted housing and broken-down schools." Given the political climate with the Obama presidency, might not a *WV* reader looking for "Hope" consider this a "theoretical" possibility, concluding that under Obama black "control" is possible, and would be better than nothing? In which case, what does black "control" of the inner cities mean, or look like, "Even if it could be accomplished"?

The entirety of the article is abundantly clear about "the suicidal illusions in the possibility of reforming the system...." The decades-long experience of "black faces in high places" produced nothing less than the current results at hand. The Black Panther Party's history epitomized this in their efforts at "community control," first, being hunted down by the FBI/police, and then politically adapting "community control" to running in elections as "Democrats," à la Bobby Seale. Initially, "community control" in the 1960s/70s was presented by the "Black Power" movement, the "Chicano Movement," and the East Coast Puerto Rican militants, The Young Lords, as a call "For Self-Determination." This was a popularized bastardization used by the militants and the New Left that was taken from the Communist Party USA that in turn bastardized (via its Stalinism) the Leninist stance of Self-Determination, in the CPUSA's attempted application of this in the American South during the concentration of the black population there up until WWII.

Fact is, the radical democratic demands of the time to address capitalist racism and oppression were in varying degrees instituted as part of the Civil Rights Movement (seen as struggling to "self-determine" one's destiny, and not of working-class struggle for a socialist revolution). These included access to higher education; for Black Studies and Chicano/Latino Studies; for minority representation on local school boards; for minority representation, e.g., in City Hall of black or brown mayors; also, for black and Chicano cops in the ghettos and barrios! And, "the struggle," into the twenty-first century, for Civilian Police Review Boards. In Los Angeles the well-known black activist, the late Michael Zinzun, would regularly organize rallies when "community" cops had gunned someone down. He would give a fiery speech to the effect that "if the community does not get their demand met for a Civilian Police Review Board...then, we will hit the streets until we do!" As the *WV* article makes clear...this is A Liberal Hoax! Countering the "suicidal illusions" *WV* argues the case of our programmatic call for "Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!" encapsulated in our fight for *revolutionary integrationism*!

I was glad the article noted both the history of Oakland mayor Ron Dellums; and how he was made to "sit" by the powers that be at the memorial for the dead cops. In the early 1970s, leftists and black militant youth in Oakland soon noticed how Dellums would talk out of both sides of his mouth. Regarding the memorial for the dead cops, the Bay Area news media repeatedly announced that "a wife" of one of the dead cops demanded that Dellums not be allowed to speak, and this without explanation. The black and white populace of Oakland had to have seen this (whether in agreement or not) as an extended middle-finger to blacks, and the black mayor! Publicly, this was to be accepted solely as "empathy" for "the wife."

B. Montoya

TROTSKY

LENIN

Women of the East: Proletarian Revolution or Slavery

In the predominantly Muslim countries of the East, the fight for women's liberation is literally a life-and-death struggle and a great motor force for proletarian revolution. In extending the 1917 workers revolution in Russia, the Bolsheviks found a key point of support among Muslim women in Central Asia in the 1920s. Subjugated, secluded and enslaved by Islamic law, the women of Central Asia had the most to gain from the October Revolution. The Bolsheviks understood that these women could be the link to break the prefeudal and tribal chains in the region. This was expressed by Najiye, a representative of the Communist women, in a speech at the First Congress of the Peoples of the East, held in September 1920 in Baku, capital of Soviet Azerbaijan.

The women's movement beginning in the East must be looked at not from the standpoint of those frivolous feminists who are content to see woman's place in social life as that of a delicate plant or an elegant doll. This movement must be seen as a vital and necessary consequence of the revolutionary movement taking place throughout the world. The women of the East are not fighting merely for the right to walk in the street without wearing the chador, as many people suppose. For the women of the East, with their high moral ideals, the question of the chador, it can be said, comes last in priority. If the women, who form half of every community, are set up against the men and do not enjoy the same rights, obviously it is impossible for society to progress; the backwardness of Eastern societies is irrefutable proof of this....

In order to deliver us from all calamities, the Communists consider it necessary to create a classless society, and to this end they declare relentless war against all the bourgeois and privileged layers. The women Communists of the East have an even harder battle to wage because, in addition, they have to fight against the despotism of their menfolk. If you, men of the East, continue now as in the past to be indifferent to the fate of women, you can be sure that our countries will perish, and you and we together with them. The alternative is for us, together with all the oppressed, to begin a bloody life-and-death struggle to win our rights by force.

I will briefly set forth the women's demands. If you want to bring about your own emancipation, listen to our demands and render us real help and cooperation.

1. Complete equality of rights.
2. Ensuring to women unconditional access to educational and vocational institutions established for men.
3. Equality of rights of both parties to marriage. Unconditional abolition of polygamy.
4. Unconditional admission of women to employment in legislative and administrative institutions.
5. Establishment of committees for the rights and protection of women everywhere, in cities, towns, and villages.

There is no doubt that we are entitled to raise these demands. In recognizing that we have equal rights, the Communists have reached out their hand to us, and we women will prove their most loyal comrades. True, we may stumble in pathless darkness, we may stand on the brink of yawning chasms, but we are not afraid, because we know that in order to see the dawn one has to pass through the dark night.

—"Report by Najiye" (1920), printed in *To See the Dawn* (Pathfinder, 1993)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is May 19

No. 937 **22 May 2009**

On USSR, Korean War and Nukes

Tokyo
2 May 2009

Dear Comrades,

The article on "Defend North Korea!" in *WV* No. 934 is good. But I think there is a missing point in the article. The U.S. imperialists wanted to use nuclear bombs during the Korean War. Their war drive was critically stopped by the successful nuclear testing of the Soviet Union. The possession of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union was important at that time. The founder of the Japanese Kakumaru group, Kanichi Kuroda, began to think of the "third camp" theory of "Anti-imperialism, Anti-Stalinism" against the successful nuclear testing of the Soviet Union.

Comradely,
H.T.

On the IG and the EFCA

Toronto
12 May 2009

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

Our polemic, "The IG and National Association of Manufacturers Oppose the EFCA" (*WV* No. 935, 24 April), repeats a factual error by the Internationalist Group concerning the legality of card checks for union organizing in Canada. The bosses have long opposed card-check systems like that in the proposed Employee Free Choice Act—which allow certification of newly organized unions when a majority of workers sign union cards, as opposed to mandatory elections after a waiting period—precisely because they make it easier to organize unions. The IG blithely dismisses all this and claims, "Canada has a card check law and only 17 percent of the private sector workforce is unionized (as opposed to 7.5 percent in the U.S.)." We rightly note, "It takes some chutzpah to sneer at 'only' more than doubling union membership!" But the truth is even more damning to the IG.

Under Canadian labour law, which is largely provincially regulated, half the provinces including three of the four most populous do *not* have card-check laws. Those that do have them generally have higher—sometimes much higher—rates of unionization. The clearest contrast is between Ontario and Quebec, the two largest and most industrialized provinces. Ontario's former card-check law was eliminated by a right-wing government in the mid 1990s; since then its unionization rate has declined to 28 percent (about 17 percent in the private sector). In Quebec, where there is still a card-check law, the equivalent rates are 40 percent overall and 27 percent in the private sector.

Of course, the existence of card checks is hardly the only factor here—as *WV* correctly notes, "The success or failure of any unionization campaign will ultimately be determined by *class struggle*." But the reality is that Quebec has a rate of unionization nearly *four times* that of the United States. Not unrelatedly, it is the only place in either Canada or the U.S. where there has been a successful campaign to organize the notoriously anti-labour Wal-Mart.

Comradely,
John Masters

Letters Policy

Workers Vanguard welcomes letters from our readers. Opinions expressed in letters do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of the *WV* Editorial Board. We reserve the right to respond to letters either at the time of publication or at a later point. We verify the authenticity of letters published in *Workers Vanguard*; only letters received with contact information will be considered for publication. Letters can be published anonymously if the author so desires. In order to facilitate the printing of letters, which we do not edit, please keep them to 500 words or less. Letters can be sent to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116 or e-mailed to vanguard@tiac.net.

"THE THREE SOURCES AND THREE COMPONENT PARTS OF MARXISM"

By V. I. Lenin

V. I. Lenin's "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism," which we reprint below, was first published in March 1913 in the Bolshevik journal Prosveshcheniye *to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx, who, along with Friedrich Engels, founded scientific socialism. The following translation is taken from Volume 19 of the* Collected Works *of Lenin (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow 1963).*

Throughout the civilised world the teachings of Marx evoke the utmost hostility and hatred of all bourgeois science (both official and liberal), which regards Marxism as a kind of "pernicious sect." And no other attitude is to be expected, for there can be no "impartial" social science in a society based on class struggle. In one way or another, *all* official and liberal science *defends* wage-slavery, whereas Marxism has declared relentless war on that slavery. To expect science to be impartial in a wage-slave society is as foolishly naive as to expect impartiality from manufacturers on the question of whether workers' wages ought not to be increased by decreasing the profits of capital.

But this is not all. The history of philosophy and the history of social science show with perfect clarity that there is nothing resembling "sectarianism" in Marxism, in the sense of its being a hidebound, petrified doctrine, a doctrine which arose *away from* the high road of the development of world civilisation. On the contrary, the genius of Marx consists precisely in his having furnished answers to questions already raised by the foremost minds of mankind. His doctrine emerged as the direct and immediate *continuation* of the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, political economy and socialism.

Panorama

Lenin speaking at the unveiling of a memorial to Marx and Engels in Moscow in 1918, on first anniversary of Russian Revolution.

The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true. It is comprehensive and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world outlook irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction, or defence of bourgeois oppression. It is the legitimate successor to the best that man produced in the nineteenth century, as represented by German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism.

It is these three sources of Marxism, which are also its component parts, that we shall outline in brief.

I

The philosophy of Marxism is *materialism*. Throughout the modern history of Europe, and especially at the end of the eighteenth century in France, where a resolute struggle was conducted against every kind of medieval rubbish, against serfdom in institutions and ideas, materialism has proved to be the only philosophy that is consistent, true to all the teachings of natural science and hostile to superstition, cant and so forth. The enemies of democracy have, therefore, always exerted all their efforts to "refute," undermine and defame materialism, and have advocated various forms of philosophical idealism, which always, in one way or another, amounts to the defence or support of religion.

Marx and Engels defended philosophical materialism in the most determined manner and repeatedly explained how

continued on page 8

New Spartacist Pamphlet

Economic Crisis: Karl Marx Was Right

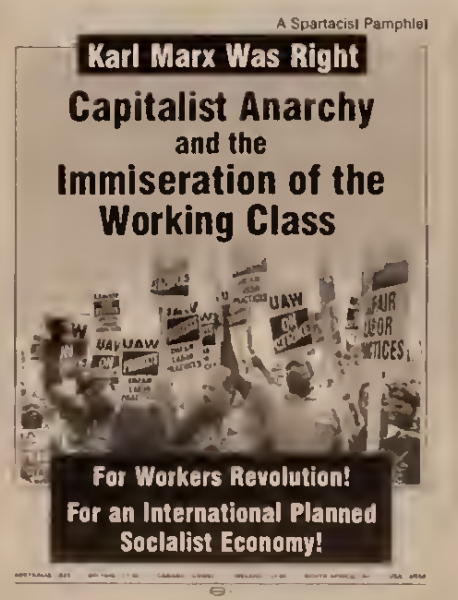
We reprint below the introduction to the just-released Spartacist pamphlet, Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class.

The anarchy and brutality of the capitalist system has been revealed again in a global economic crisis, which threatens to reach the proportions of the Great Depression. As millions are thrown out of work, as massive numbers of foreclosures throw people out of their homes, as hunger stalks the poor, black people and other minorities, the sick and vulnerable, the U.S. has seen a bitter winter of deprivation. The impact of this crisis extends far beyond the U.S., threatening the lives and livelihoods of the working class and oppressed internationally. It is left to revolutionary Marxists both to explain the roots of the current crisis and to provide the program necessary to put an end to this barbaric, irrational system through the emancipation of the proletariat and establishment of its class rule, thus laying the basis for the construction of a socialist planned economy as a transition to a classless, egalitarian and harmonious society on a global scale. That is the purpose of this pamphlet, composed of articles previously published in *Workers Vanguard*.

Leon Trotsky's *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International* (also known as the Transitional Program), adopted as the basic programmatic document of the founding conference of the Fourth International in September 1938, is particularly relevant and urgent today. The political situation of the late 1930s and that of the post-Soviet world in which we live today are quite different, to be sure. But Trotsky's declaration that "under the conditions of disintegrating capitalism, the masses continue to live the impoverished life of the oppressed, threatened now more than at any other time with the danger of being cast into the pit of pauperism" could have been written about conditions in Detroit and elsewhere today. The same is the case with the call in the Transitional Program that: "The Fourth International declares uncompromising war on the politics of the capitalists, which to a considerable degree, like the politics of their agents, the reformists, aims to place the whole burden of militarism, the crises, the disorganization of the monetary system, and all other scourges stemming from capitalism's death agony upon the backs of the toilers. The Fourth International demands *employment* and *decent living conditions* for all" (emphasis in original). Such transitional demands, as Trotsky wrote, stemmed "from today's conditions and from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class" and unalterably led "to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat."

Against the tried and failed stratagems pushed by liberals and fake socialists—from the Keynesian project of "benevolent" intervention by the capitalist state to the British Labour Party's bourgeois nationalizations in the post-World War II period—we Marxists understand that no amount of tinkering with the existing system can wrench it into serving the needs of the proletariat and the oppressed. The 1997-98 *Workers Vanguard* series "Wall Street and the War Against Labor," reprinted here, takes this up in the U.S. context. It also deals with the labor movement in the U.S. and the roots of its historic economic militancy and political backwardness—a backwardness due not least to the continuing oppression of black people as a race-color caste, integrated into the industrial proletariat but at the same time forcibly segregated at the bottom of society.

The more recent articles reprinted in this pamphlet put forward our revolutionary program against those who purvey illusions in the Democratic Party and its current Obama administration as well as for class-struggle opposition to the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy. Part and parcel of such a struggle is a fight against nationalist, chauvinist protectionism, anti-immigrant racism and the anti-Communist poison spread by the union tops against those states where capitalism has been overthrown, centrally China but also the other deformed workers states of North Korea, Cuba, Vietnam. Our program is that of *unconditional military defense* of those states against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution and for *proletarian political revolution* to replace the nationalist bureaucratic regimes that undermine their defense. Our model remains that of the victorious October Revolution of 1917 led by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party. For class against class! For new October Revolutions! ■



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French Caribbean Colonies Shaken by General Strikes

Corbis

AFP

Left: Farm union strikers block access to "La Lézarde" industrial area, Martinique, February 13. Right: February 14 demonstration in Le Moule, Guadeloupe, in memory of four people killed by colonial police at strikers' roadblock in 1952.

For the Right of Independence! Down With French Imperialism!

The following article is translated from *Le Bolchévik* No. 187 (March 2009), newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League. The article was originally published at the close of the general strikes that shook the Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique for 44 and 38 days respectively. Ever since, the French colonial overlords and the local capitalists have

LE BOLCHEVIK

been striving to overturn the key gains won by the workers in the "Bino Agreement" (named after the trade unionist killed during the strike), notably a 200 euro wage increase for the lowest-paid workers and price cuts for basic necessities. In response, the working masses of Guadeloupe and Martinique have been carrying out localized strike action to defend the 200 euro agreement, including on plantations where owners, heavily subsidized by European Union and French government grants, are pleading poverty. The workers are also waging a fight to reopen negotiations on the price of water and bread and to oppose the hundreds of layoffs.

At the time of the strike settlement on March 4, only 17,000 of the 80,000 workers set to gain the wage increase had obtained their bosses' formal agreement to maintain the raise once the state ceases to subsidize most of the increase in 2012. Further class struggle and workplace occupations in the wake of the general strike have extended that agreement to 50,000 workers. To what extent the agreement will be honored in 2012 depends on the relationship of forces between the working class and the capitalists. In early April, the French government reneged on its promise to make it mandatory for the bosses of the major capitalist enterprises in particular to pay up once the state subsidies end. The Sarkozy government in France obscenely argued hard times for their billionaire cronies. But the French government's main reason for scrapping the agreement is to undermine the strikes' popularity in France. These strikes showed that sharp class battles are crucial to fight back against the capitalist onslaught as well as against state repression meted out to an increasingly embittered and angry proletariat in France, as well as in the colonies.

The other key demand won in the strike settlement was an agreement by the government's colonial representative to lower the grossly inflated prices of basic necessities. But many of these reduced-price items have simply disappeared from the supermarket shelves and have been replaced by similar products whose prices have actually been marked up. The agreement to freeze rents in state-subsidized housing is not being fulfilled either.

Just days after the strike agreement was reached, the attorney general in Guadeloupe brought charges against strike leader Elie Domota. He was charged with "provocation to extort the signing of an agreement by force concerning the so-called Jacques Bino agreement" and, grotesquely, "incitement to racial discrimination, hatred and violence against categories of people based on their ethnic origin...notably and specifically people known as *békés* [the descendants of the original slave owners] and the companies led by them." This alludes to an interview Domota gave on March 5 in which he said of the bosses unwilling to sign the agreement: "Either they implement the agreement, or they will have to leave Guadeloupe.... We are very firm about this. We will not allow a bunch of békés to restore slavery." ***The charges against Domota must be dropped immediately. The workers movement, particularly in France, must defend him. An injury to one is an injury to all!***

These attacks by the French imperialists and the local capitalists so soon after the strikes and protests in Guadeloupe and Martinique as well as in the other French colonies underline that the bourgeoisie will always seek to reverse the gains wrenched from it in class battles. While the gains of the strikes must be defended down the line, the perspective has to be the fight for socialist revolution, as our comrades of the LTF lay out in the article below. To this end, especially given the small size of the proletariat in Guadeloupe and Martinique, the mobilization of the French workers to defend their class brothers' fight to lift the yoke of colonialism and the legacy of slavery is key. In so doing, the French proletariat will also be fighting to defend its own historic interests—that is, the overthrow of this rotten, racist capitalist system.

* * *

MARCH 5—The Ligue Trotskyste de France stands in full solidarity with the general strikes in Guadeloupe, Martinique and Réunion against the economic and racial discrimination suffered by the populations at the hands of the French imperialist colonial masters. The struggle began on January 20 in Guadeloupe, which was paralyzed for 44 days. Last night an agreement was finally signed between the coalition leading the strike, Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon [Alliance Against Profiteering—LKP], and the [French] government's local representative; the LKP then called for an end to the strike. The strike was a victory, but it remains to be seen just how far the prices of basic necessities will really fall and how widely one of the key concessions to the strikers—a 200 euro increase for low-wage earners and welfare recipients—will be implemented. The 200 euros consists of a state subsidy of 100 to 150 euros a month for a three-year period. The local MEDEF, the main organization of the bosses, refused to sign the agreement [to pay the remaining 50 to 100 euros], merely recommending that its members, depending on the relationship of forces at each workplace, pay a bonus of 50 to 100 euros, rather than a wage increase. They will do everything possible to avoid paying it or will renege on it as soon as possible.

The strikes were initially met with silence and racist contempt by the Sarkozy government, paralleling the French rulers' contempt for the working class, the poor, and, especially, minorities and immigrants in mainland France. But in the context of the world economic crisis, the ruling class became increasingly concerned that the struggle would spread to mainland France. The government responded to the strikes as every colonial administration has always done when facing major resistance movements in the colonies: by wielding the iron fist of state repression (remember the atrocities of 1952 and 1967). [In 1952 the French riot police killed four people in Guadeloupe during a strike. In 1967, following a strike in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, French cops killed at least 87 people, as acknowledged by the Minister of Colonies in 1985.]

In the early hours of February 18, trade unionist Jacques Bino was shot and killed in Pointe-à-Pitre. His murderer has so far not been identified. The government's version of events—that he was, in the words of French prime minister Fillon, killed by "petty criminals"—has in no

WV Map

way been proven. What we do know is that responsibility for Jacques Bino's tragic death lies with the French capitalist class and its racist state apparatus, whose attacks and provocations produced this social explosion of historic proportions. We also condemn the savage racist cop attack against LKP strike leader and trade unionist Alex Lollia on February 16, causing him head injuries and heart problems. Four squads of riot cops were sent from France to Guadeloupe during the strike, as well as internal security police and an elite RAID ["anti-terrorist"] unit; two squads of riot police were dispatched to Martinique, joining the thousands of cops and soldiers already there on a mission to "restore order." We demand that all protesters detained in Guadeloupe and Martinique since the beginning of the strike—activists, trade unionists and the dozens of young demonstrators predictably labeled "hooligans" and "delinquents" by Sarkozy (*Le Monde*, 20 February)—be immediately freed and that the charges against them be dropped. ***All French troops and riot cops out of Guodeloupe, Martinique, Réunion and French Guiona!***

While fighting for a proletarian leadership, we support struggles against colonial rule even when led by petty-bourgeois and bourgeois-nationalist forces. It is necessary to build internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist parties in Guadeloupe, Martinique, Réunion [east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean] and French Guiana to fight imperialism on a proletarian program and in sharp political combat against the dead-end politics of petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalism. Colonialism has bequeathed a proletariat that is very small—except in construction and key services like transport, sanitation, etc.—as well as a thin layer of agricultural workers on the plantations. The proletariat from Guadeloupe and Martinique is mainly based in France, where it represents a living link for socialist revolution in both France and the West Indies. This makes it all the more important to turn to the French working class, directly posing the need for political struggle against the workers' social-democratic leadership, which does everything possible to prevent the struggle from spreading to the French mainland.

Look at the role played at the height of the strike in Guadeloupe by the Socialist Party (SP), tailed by the rest of the left. In a recent interview in *Le Parisien* (13 February) SP leader Martine Aubry declared: "I am indeed afraid of the discontent felt by people of Guadeloupe and Martinique spreading here.... We must do everything we can to prevent this from happening." The struggle against these traitors and those who tail them raises the need for a revolutionary party based on proletarian internationalism. This is what the LTF fights for.

Background to the Strike

The social upheaval in Guadeloupe was initiated by protests in Réunion and French Guiana last November-December where roadblocks and other demonstrations succeeded in winning a price cut for oil and diesel fuel. Less than a week after the price cuts were enacted in French Guiana, roadblocks went up in Guadeloupe; three days later the government agreed to a similar price cut. As poverty and desperation have worsened with the economic crisis, this modest success triggered wider protests against the high cost of living, followed shortly afterwards by a call for a general strike on January 20. The strike was called by the Liyannaj Kont Pwofitasyon, a broad coalition of trade unions, left groups and petty-bourgeois nationalist parties and organizations.

The upheaval had been brewing for some time. Some 25 percent of Guadeloupe's population of working age is unemployed according to official (and thus underestimated) figures, with 22 percent unemployed in Martinique, compared to a figure of 8 percent for mainland France. Youth unemployment (among 15- to 24-year-olds) is at 56 percent and 48 percent for the two islands respectively (*Le Figaro*, 18 February). While the average income in Guadeloupe is about half that of France, prices are on average 50 percent higher than those on the mainland. These high prices are in part due to the fact that most basic goods—including fruit and vegetables—are imported from France. This prevents any kind of self-sufficiency, making it possible for the *béké* capitalists, the descendants of the original slave owners, to continue making enormous profits by retaining a quasi-monopoly on imports and distribution. In addition, in recent years thousands of jobs were lost directly and indirectly in agriculture and specifically in banana production following a sharp trade dispute between the European Union (EU) and the U.S., which removed the islands' protected trade with EU states. As a result, material conditions on the islands have gone from bad to worse, only further increasing their economic dependency on French imperialism.

In 1946 Martinique and Guadeloupe, together with Réunion and Guiana, became the so-called "Overseas *Départements* of France" (DOMs—*Départements d'outremer*) under the "tripartite" (Gaullist-Communist-Socialist) popular-front government. This status has allowed their inhabitants to work in metropolitan France where they initially served, especially in the 1950s-'70s, as a source of cheap labor for the building industry; they then filled major labor shortages in the public sector—notably in the postal service, public transport and health care. *Département* status has also given the population access to the French national health care system, retirement and other social benefits and a vote in French national (and EU) elections. The French state's vaunted "generosity" toward its "citizens" in the West Indies and the other colonies (who experience racist discrimination when they come to France) has supposedly been proof that under the Republic all men are "equal" irrespective of the color of their skin.

The existence of the DOMs, together with the recruitment of numerous black people from Martinique and Guadeloupe into the French police on the mainland during this period, was also used to conceal the brutal reality of racist oppression for France's minorities and immigrants. Not only did successive French bourgeois governments seek to pit white French workers against immigrants and minorities to further their capitalist divide-and-rule policy, but they also sought to pit blacks moving to France from the West Indies—held up as "assimilated" French—against minorities originating from North and West Africa who to this day are excoriated by the government for supposedly "refusing to assimilate."

The standard of living in Guadeloupe and Martinique under French domination is undeniably higher than in most other Caribbean islands—life in general is miserable in the region. But Cuba today boasts the highest literacy rate and the lowest infant mortality rate in Latin America, with life expectancy equal to that of U.S. citizens (and higher than for the U.S. black population). The enormous gains for the Cuban working masses, especially women and blacks, are due to the fact that Cuba is a workers state, even though bureaucratically deformed, originating in the expropriation of the U.S. imperialists and their local lackeys in 1960.

Thanks to critical Soviet military and economic aid, the resources of Cuban society were invested in a centralized, planned economy, guaranteeing everyone a job, decent housing, food and education. We unconditionally defend the Cuban deformed workers state against attempts to roll back these gains through the restoration of capitalism led by U.S. imperialism and internal counterrevolutionary forces, while we fight for a proletarian political revolution against the Castroite Stalinist bureaucracy (see "Defend the Cuban Revolution!" *Workers Vanguard* No. 915, 23 May 2008).

But if Guadeloupe is compared with Haiti, for example, which remains one of the world's poorest countries, with a 60-year life expectancy compared to 78 years in Guadeloupe, it is clear that the French West Indies' poverty is relative. Endemic unemployment in Guadeloupe and Martinique and the fact that official personal income is half that in metropolitan France despite the inflated prices only underlines that there can never be "equality" for "French" West Indians under imperialism. Twenty-five years after the adoption of the 1946 law turning the French West Indian islands into French *départements*, Martinique's historic leader and poet, the late Aimé Césaire, who in the 1940s was a member of the reformist French Communist Party and a staunch proponent of the colonial legislation, said bitterly:

> "*In 1946, we dreamed of a generous France*.... For us, becoming a département was to mean equal rights. But it didn't. The new system became even more colonialist than the old one. Little by little it exuded its privileged people: those who live off it, the state functionaries, the large businesses, the West Indies 'lobby' which puts pressure on the rulers."
>
> —quoted in *Le Monde*, 20 February

Reuters

AP

Above: Police repression against protesters in Guadeloupe, as month-old general strike heated up. Left: Relatives carrying the coffin of Jacques Bino, trade unionist killed during strike, at memorial ceremony on February 21.

For the Right to Independence!

It is an elementary duty for revolutionary internationalists to defend the right of self-determination for the French colonies and, as forthright opponents of French colonialism, the LTF would be in favor of independence. However we are against forcing annexation, federation, or even independence on anyone, and we do not currently advocate independence for Guadeloupe and Martinique, largely because the vast majority of the population is not in favor of it at this time. A recent poll (*Le Figaro Magazine*, 28 February) states that 80 percent of Guadeloupeans are opposed to independence. Self-determination is a democratic right; to "unconditionally" impose a separate state on a people is not self-determination. The wishes of the population are an important factor for Marxists in determining how to get the national question off the agenda and clear the road for revolutionary internationalist class struggle.

While Guadeloupeans may now wish for greater autonomy from the French state—after having overwhelmingly rejected such a move in a 2003 referendum—most people in Guadeloupe as well as those in the three other "DOMs" presently do not support independence from France, which would deprive them of the legal right to live, study and work in France without Sarkozy's immigration cops storming into their homes and workplaces to arrest and deport them. Independence would also deprive them of some of the remaining social gains they retain as an overseas *département*, gains won largely by the powerful French working class in sharp class struggles with the bourgeoisie. In the framework of capitalism, "independence" for Guadeloupe would offer up the prospect of the same desperate impoverishment as most other Caribbean states, which remain under the thumb of U.S. or British imperialism.

French Republic = Racist Colonial Oppression

In Guadeloupe and Martinique, the exploitation of the population of African and Indian origin is the legacy of slavery and colonial domination. The *békés*, who according to most sources make up between 1 and 2.5 percent of the population, maintain their stranglehold on the economy, particularly in Martinique. The racist contempt of *békés* for the non-white majority on the islands was recently exposed in a French television documentary, "The Last Masters of Martinique." It showed one Alain Huyghes-Despointes, made a knight of the Legion of Honor by Chirac in 2005, bemoaning that "Historians will only speak of the negative

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Publication of the Ligue Trotskyste de France

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Caribbean...

(continued from page 5)

sides of slavery and that's a shame," while remarking on his distaste for mixed-race children: "We [the *békés*] wanted to preserve the race," he commented (*l'Humanité*, 13 February).

But the French bourgeoisie, which likes to market itself as a global defender of "human rights," *is* the colonial master. It upholds the system whereby the *békés* maintain their privileges and racist discrimination permeates the island in ways reminiscent of the United States or South Africa. This is most notably seen in hiring, with middle- and senior-level posts overwhelmingly going to *békés* or to white French people from the mainland who generally arrive for three-year stints and live in unofficially whites-only beach resorts. But it is also seen throughout all other aspects of life—working conditions, health care, housing, transport, etc.

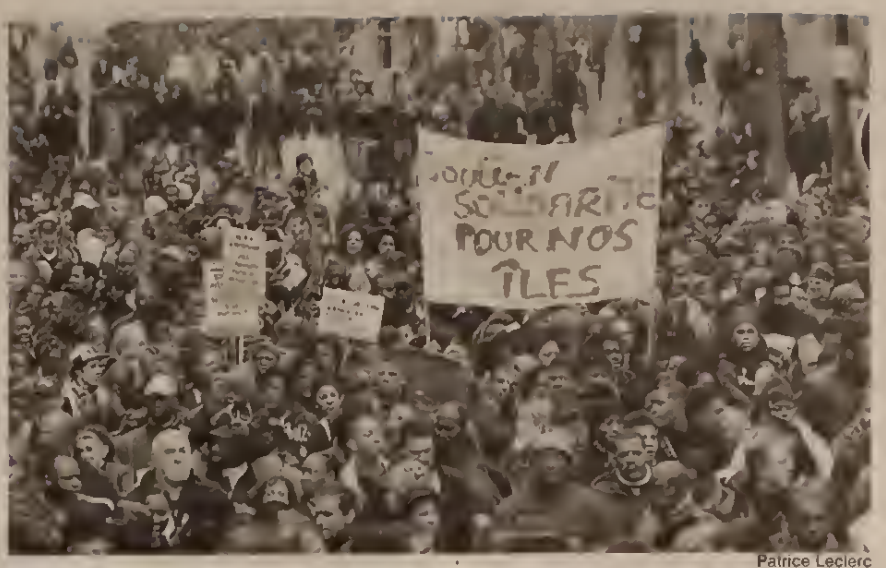
The *békés* have longstanding and many-sided connections with the bourgeoisie and politicians in mainland France. It is telling that the representative of the French government [*préfet*] in Martinique, Ange Mancini, was living in a home "rented" from Huyghes-Despointes—until he was forced to move out when a scandal blew up after the documentary was shown on TV in the midst of the general strike. The *békés* also have franchises with or act as sole distributors for French monopolies like Carrefour and Renault and share the colonial superprofits with them. This inextricably links the struggle against racial and colonial oppression with the fight to overthrow the capitalist system.

Since the general strike began in Guadeloupe, numerous protesters have denounced colonial rule and its racist disdain for the lives of non-white islanders. A tragic illustration of this mentality is the chlordecone pesticide scandal. Chlordecone is a product which was banned in the U.S. in 1976; it has been banned in metropolitan France since 1990, but was banned in the French West Indies only in 1993. Even after 1993 it went on being used clandestinely in Martinique and Guadeloupe until 2002, imported into the islands by mainly *béké* businessmen who produced it in Brazil under a different name, Curlone. Leading scientists from the West Indies and from France have described its use as "downright poisoning" of the population and a "major health crisis" (see interview with Paris-based cancer specialist Professor Belpomme in *Le Parisien*, 17 September 2007). It remains in the ground and in the waters for a century after use. Today Guadeloupe ranks second highest in the world for prostate cancer, which some leading scientists believe to be related to the prolonged use of chlordecone. Its presence is also linked to other cancers, reduced fertility and birth deformities.

Reports from ecologists and scientists warned for years against the dangers of the pesticide and the huge amounts being used in Guadeloupe and Martinique. French state officials ignored them, later claiming to lack sufficient information. Today the French government again claims that there is insufficient proof to link the high cancer rates to chlordecone and they have even refused to open an investigation. The LKP's strike demands included the need to define "health measures to protect the populations of contaminated zones" and for "compensation for the professional and civilian victims."

French Workers—Powerful Potential Allies of Guadeloupean Workers

In the struggle against racist colonial oppression and capitalist exploitation in France and in the colonies, we fight for the revolutionary unity of the working masses across the Atlantic. We call upon all workers, especially those in the belly of the French imperialist beast, to support the strikes in the French West Indies and Réunion, and to oppose the French government's repression of strikers and youth. In the imperialist mainland this also means fighting to break the working class from the pro-imperialist chauvinism pushed by the trade-union bureaucrats and social-democratic parties who with the economic crisis are increasingly peddling divisive protectionist poison in the name of "national unity" behind the French bosses against their foreign rivals. And where workers of West Indian origin make up a large part of the workforce, such as in the post office or health care, the union bureaucrats often actively discourage solidarity among workers, for example calling only on workers from the DOMs (and excluding other workers) to take strike and other actions for special vacation rights for workers from the French colonies [for example, the right to accumulate vacation time over several years to go back home]. On February 21 the trade unions did finally mobilize for protests across France in solidarity with the strikes in Guadeloupe and Martinique, but, significantly, the vast majority of those marching under the CGT banner in Paris were of West Indian origin, and very few white French workers were mobilized by the CGT and the other trade unions.



Patrice Leclerc

Demonstration in Paris in solidarity with strikes in French West Indies, February 21.

Corbis

Martinique, February 13: Protesters against high cost of living in front of House of Trade Unions. Signs read "Bar Code" and "Black Code," linking high prices to colonial status and legacy of slavery.

Olivier Besancenot's New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) and Lutte Ouvrière (LO), which both have sister organizations in the French West Indies, see the combative and courageous strikes "as an example to follow in the mainland." They pass over, among other fundamental differences from the situation in France, the fact that, as a result of colonial rule, the economy is so dependent that there is barely a proletariat in the two islands. Besancenot said in *Le Parisien* of February 19 that the strikes can put pressure on the government to "impose another distribution of wealth, a 300 euro wage increase" in France. It is typical of reformists to limit their demands to a slightly different redistribution of wealth. Since a handful of capitalists own the means of production and exploit the majority of the working population, "another distribution of wealth" would mean they would throw out a few more crumbs—which they will then seek to grab back by other means.

Reforms won in hard class struggle, which must be defended to the hilt, are constantly being snatched away by the bourgeoisie if the workers don't fight back with determination. But such attacks often get willing collaboration from the union bureaucrats—whose material privileges shape their role as "social partners" of the bourgeoisie—to defend French capitalist interests against rival capitalist powers. This was the case with the general strikes of June 1936 and May 1968. These general strikes led to prerevolutionary situations, but the social democrats, and above all the reformist CP and union bureaucrats, betrayed the working class (and all those under French imperialist rule abroad) by accepting a few crumbs at the negotiating table in exchange for calling off the strike. After 1936 and 1968, the capitalists sought, especially through inflation, to take back the concessions they had been forced to make.

In the wake of capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union in 1991-1992, the bourgeoisie has renewed its attacks on the workers and poor of the world as imperialist rivalries have intensified. Claiming that "communism is dead," they have been attacking gains such as pensions, health care, etc., known in West Europe as the "welfare state," which to some extent were also granted to France's colonies. The counterrevolution in the USSR, a historic defeat for the world proletariat, was fully supported by the NPA's forerunner, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR). In his autobiography *You'll Grow Out of It*, historic LCR leader Alain Krivine states: "Its end [the USSR's] could only have us rejoicing. And without the least hesitation, we did indeed rejoice."

For an Independent Workers Mobilization—Down With Class Collaboration!

For Marxists, a general strike that paralyzes the country would pose the question of workers power in a revolutionary situation. For the NPA on the other hand (or for LO with its calls for an "unlimited general strike"), it means nothing more than winning a 300 euro raise for the lowest-paid workers. Behind their "combative" rhetoric, the NPA and LO are busy trying to put a new "left" government back in office. In the fight against exploitation and for socialist revolution, it is necessary to break workers' illusions that a "left" capitalist government can do anything other than protect the interests of the French bourgeoisie. In France, since 1936, "left" governments have taken the form of popular fronts—that is, governmental blocs between capitalist parties such as the Left Radicals, Chevènement's Citizens' Movement, etc. and reformist workers parties such as the Socialist Party (SP) and the CP. From the French West Indies to Algeria to Rwanda, these "left" governments, on behalf of French imperialism, have left a bloody legacy.

Moreover, in Guadeloupe the colonial state administration is run (to the extent that powers are devolved) by the local SP. Victorin Lurel, SP president of the regional council of Guadeloupe, declared on February 14, in his name and that of Jacques Gillot, president of the General Council, who is also linked to the SP in Guadeloupe: "We demand a relaxation of the general strike so that the country can run more normally" and so that children "can go to school and everybody in Guadeloupe can move around and to allow those businesses that wish to work to do so" (*L'Express*, 14 February). Apparently they, like Sarkozy himself, want a general strike that nobody notices!

Aubry, CP leader Buffet and Mélenchon of the newly formed Left Party, who seek to lead a new popular front in 2012, have already shown their zeal in administering oppression during their years as ministers under Jospin's ["Plural Left" popular-front] government. That government, which demoralized and demobilized the working class, privatized more state companies than any right-wing administration before it; in the wake of the September 11 terror attacks in the U.S., the Jospin government whipped up its own racist "war on terror." Measures such as "Vigipirate," increased surveillance powers and other repressive laws were introduced, initially targeting racial minorities. We warned then that their ultimate aim was the whole working class, as we are starting to see today.

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Since the "Plural Left's" crushing defeat in 2002, the SP, in its bid to get reelected, has flirted with the center-right [capitalist] UDF/Modem party, keeping the reformist "far left" at arm's length. However in the face of the economic crisis, the SP opportunists have opted for the moment to dust off their pink flags and reactivate their members: they came out for the January 29 demonstrations where they were supposed to rediscover, as Aubry put it, the "French [who] suffer." But there is no contending popular-front coalition yet; hence the task for the "left" today is to restore its own credibility to the bourgeoisie as a viable governmental option. To do that they need to try to convince the working masses that they would really be a lesser evil to Sarkozy & Co. so that once in power they can take off from the last government and do the dirty work of administering capitalism.

To this end, on February 4 Lutte Ouvrière and the NPA/ex-LCR signed a joint declaration for "unity in struggle" with the SP, the CP, the Chevènementists and various petty-bourgeois ecologist and feminist organizations. They thus contributed to substantiating the SP's claims to "support the social *m*ovement" including, in the words of their statement, their "support to the imposing social movement which has been mobilizing for several weeks in Guadeloupe." The NPA and LO thus play a crucial role in restoring the SP's credibility in the eyes of the working class. Despite the NPA's cynical and oft-repeated claims of "independence" from the SP, their signature on such popular-frontist declarations in the name of "unity" works precisely to pave the way for a new "left" capitalist government. They also provide the SP with a platform and a wider hearing in the class struggle—all the better to sell it out.

The NPA implicitly acknowledges the SP's strikebreaking role in their February 16 leaflet "Guadeloupe, Martinique: Let's Do Like Them!" where they describe how the SP representatives in Guadeloupe wanted to "'soften up' the strike in return for crumbs." But the very next day after writing this the NPA went ahead and signed a second "unity in struggle" declaration with the SP and the petty-bourgeois groups stating that in Guadeloupe "extending the *m*obilization is more necessary than ever" and calling to "mobilize further and make March 19th a resounding success." Such cynicism is the hallmark of social democracy.

Petty-Bourgeois Nationalism Can Offer Only Misery

While in France the task of a revolutionary party is to rally the working class to the side of the West Indians in struggle, in Guadeloupe and Martinique the key task is to break the hold of nationalist false consciousness. Under imperialism, nations are not equal and while we defend the right to an independent Guadeloupe under capitalism, independence could only drive the standard of living of the poor further down. This is why the fight must be part of a wider struggle for socialist revolution in France, Latin America and North America where there is a strong working class. Then the masses of Guadeloupe and Martinique will have a real choice about how to exercise their right to national self-determination.

In Guadeloupe, Lutte Ouvrière's sister organization, Combat Ouvrier, is part of the LKP coalition, together with a few dozen other organizations which include trade unions (with the pro-independence UGTG in the fore), the Guadeloupean Communist Party and many petty-bourgeois nationalist and cultural organizations. The LKP is in fact a combative popular-frontist coalition, which includes the workers movement but at bottom represents the program of bourgeois nationalism. Many of the LKP's 149 demands are supportable including the 200 euro raise for all those on low wages and on welfare, as well as demands to introduce a vast program of public housing construction and a real public transport service. However, many of their other demands highlight the bourgeois-nationalist nature of the bloc, addressing: "People of Guadeloupe, workers, peasants, tradesmen, pensioners, unemployed, *entrepreneurs* and youth" (our emphasis).

Thus they demand that priority be given to local capitalists over others: "Priority and easier access to the market as well as public aid for Guadeloupean businesses." Fundamentally this is a nationalist demand for black Guadeloupeans to exploit other Guadeloupeans. Some leading nationalists in both Guadeloupe and Martinique often express their desire for the transfer of much of the state administration to a locally run body which could slash social benefits. According to the nationalists, these benefits make their agriculture and tourism uncompetitive against other Caribbean islands. But right now the nationalists are not emphasizing the struggle for independence—their program is rather to grab for themselves the profits from colonial exploitation which for centuries have been pocketed by the *békés*.

no credit

Monument in Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, in memory of Colonel Louis Delgrès, hero of struggle against French troops sent by Napoleon to restore slavery in 1802.

The demands also included: "Guadeloupeans must be the first hired" and "Mandatory hiring of Guadeloupeans in all businesses which benefit from public subsidies." Since the French from the mainland and the *békés* make up the overwhelming majority in public service and private industry management in Guadeloupe, the demands on hiring are partly directed against colonialism. Equal pay and working conditions for all! To remedy racial discrimination we would defend measures that favor hiring black Guadeloupeans.

But demanding, for instance, that state-funded jobs must go to Guadeloupeans only is also directed against other oppressed nationalities of the region, particularly Haitians, who reportedly make up as much as 10 percent of the island's population. Marxists oppose demands which result in pitting oppressed black Guadeloupeans against Haitians. Since 2002, under Sarkozy, first as minister of police and then as president, deportations and brutal treatment of Haitians have worsened. A special police unit with deportation quotas was set up in Guadeloupe in 2006 specifically to track Haitian immigrants. Raids on immigrants' homes and the plantations where they work, as well as immigrants being arrested at police headquarters when they seek to regularize their papers, form a familiar picture to the thousands of undocumented workers in France. Officially, between 1,500 and 2,000 people, mainly Haitians, are deported every year from Guadeloupe; proportionately, that would amount to between 200,000 and 300,000 people deported from mainland France, which is ten times the number of deportations currently taking place!

Avant-garde jeunesse

19 February 1968: Demonstration in Paris to demand freedom for independence activists in French West Indies and Guiana. A year earlier, during a strike in Guadeloupe, nearly 90 people were shot by colonial police.

Faced with this deportation machine, the LKP's hollow demand to "Stop abominations against foreign workers" comes across as a refusal to frontally oppose the deportations. We counterpose to this the demands: ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants, in France and in its colonies! Down with deportations! Abolish Article 5 of the Public Sector code which reserves civil service jobs solely for French and EU citizens!*** In a situation of widespread poverty such as in Guadeloupe, the state's xenophobic attempts to scapegoat Haitians can often fall on fertile ground. Reports that *béké* plantation owners in Guadeloupe have called on Haitian agricultural workers to break the strikes of Guadeloupeans serve only to further underline the importance of Guadeloupeans defending Haitian immigrants and fighting for their equal pay and conditions to undercut the bosses' attempts at divide and rule.

The direct participation in the LKP of Combat Ouvrier and the NPA's uncritical praises of the LKP pander to petty-bourgeois nationalism and expose the politics of LO and the NPA as petty-bourgeois liberal reformism. The NPA insists that French workers must build a broad front as in Guadeloupe. But instead of subordinating themselves to petty-bourgeois nationalism as they do in Guadeloupe, in France they would subordinate themselves to the imperialist French chauvinist Chevènement and the SP social democrats who have their own sordid colonial history. [LKP spokesman] Elie Domota and his comrades are courageous militants who put their lives on the line, as exemplified by the cop attack on Alex Lollia. However, the fact that strike leader Domota holds the management position of Assistant Director of the ANPE (National Employment Agency) in Guadeloupe reflects his program of bourgeois nationalism. In France the Assistant Director of the ANPE is the former head of human resources for Renault Engineering!

Since Combat Ouvrier is part of the LKP, Lutte Ouvrière does not criticize petty-bourgeois nationalism at all in this strike. Thus LO refrained from criticizing the blockades manned by youth from the destitute suburbs of Pointe-à-Pitre, in contrast to what they did during the *banlieue* revolt in France three years ago, when they despicably supported "restoring order," capitulating to the SP and CP social democrats. However, these economists insist that the most important demand in the Guadeloupe general strike is the call for a wage increase and a halt to price hikes because these are demands "which concern all the workers" including in France (see Arlette Laguiller's editorial in *Lutte Ouvrière*, 20 February).

In insisting on the 200 euro wage raise, which for LO is the only demand which can unite the working class, LO betrays its orientation towards the privileged layers of the white proletariat in France while minority youth from the city housing projects, for example, see the situation in Guadeloupe and Martinique as a reflection of the racial and ethnic discrimination they themselves suffer at work and at school.

LO thus minimizes the legacy of slavery and racial and colonial oppression, in contrast to Marxists who, as Lenin taught, take up every instance of oppression to draw a general, more complete picture of oppression under capitalism and to mobilize broad layers of the oppressed behind the working class and its revolutionary party.

Our program for Martinique and Guadeloupe, to end colonial oppression and exploitation once and for all, is premised on our proletarian internationalism, including centrally the fight for socialist revolution in the U.S., France and the other advanced capitalist countries. Only socialist revolution, laying the foundations for an international socialist planned economy throughout the region, in alliance with the French proletariat (including but by no means limited to the proletariat originating from the West Indies) can open the road to genuine economic development and an end to the struggle for survival in countries which are under the imperialist jackboot. ***Victory now to the general strikes in Martinique and Réunion! Forward to the reforging of the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution!*** ■

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Archives of Marxism...

(continued from page 3)

profoundly erroneous is every deviation from this basis. Their views are most clearly and fully expounded in the works of Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach* and *Anti-Dühring*, which, like the *Communist Manifesto*, are handbooks for every class-conscious worker.

But Marx did not stop at eighteenth-century materialism: he developed philosophy to a higher level. He enriched it with the achievements of German classical philosophy, especially of Hegel's system, which in its turn had led to the materialism of Feuerbach. The main achievement was ***diolectics***, i.e., the doctrine of development in its fullest, deepest and most comprehensive form, the doctrine of the relativity of the human knowledge that provides us with a reflection of eternally developing matter. The latest discoveries of natural science—radium, electrons, the transmutation of elements—have been a remarkable confirmation of Marx's dialectical materialism despite the teachings of the bourgeois philosophers with their "new" reversions to old and decadent idealism.

Marx deepened and developed philosophical materialism to the full, and extended the cognition of nature to include the cognition of ***human society***. His ***historical materialism*** was a great achievement in scientific thinking. The chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in views on history and politics were replaced by a strikingly integral and harmonious scientific theory, which shows how, in consequence of the growth of productive forces, out of one system of social

LIFE

G.W.F. Hegel

life another and higher system develops—how capitalism, for instance, grows out of feudalism.

Just as man's knowledge reflects nature (i.e., developing matter), which exists independently of him, so man's ***sacial knawledge*** (i.e., his various views and doctrines—philosophical, religious, political and so forth) reflects the ***economic system*** of society. Political institutions are a superstructure on the economic foundation. We see, for example, that the various political forms of the modern European states serve to strengthen the domination of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat.

Marx's philosophy is a consummate philosophical materialism which has provided mankind, and especially the working class, with powerful instruments of knowledge.

II

Having recognised that the economic system is the foundation on which the political superstructure is erected, Marx devoted his greatest attention to the study of this economic system. Marx's principal work, *Capital*, is devoted to a study of the economic system of modern, i.e., capitalist, society.

Classical political economy, before

Progress

Karl Marx

Marx, evolved in England, the most developed of the capitalist countries. Adam Smith and David Ricardo, by their investigations of the economic system, laid the foundations of the ***labaur theary af value***. Marx continued their work; he provided a proof of the theory and developed it consistently. He showed that the value of every commodity is determined by the quantity of socially necessary labour time spent on its production.

Where the bourgeois economists saw a relation between things (the exchange of one commodity for another) Marx revealed a ***relation between peaple***. The exchange of commodities expresses the connection between individual producers through the market. ***Money*** signifies that the connection is becoming closer and closer, inseparably uniting the entire economic life of the individual producers into one whole. *Copitol* signifies a further development of this connection: man's labour-power becomes a commodity. The wage-worker sells his labour-power to the owner of land, factories and instruments of labour. The worker spends one part of the day covering the cost of maintaining himself and his family (wages), while the other part of the day he works without remuneration, creating for the capitalist ***surplus-volue***, the source of profit, the source of the wealth of the capitalist class.

The doctrine of surplus-value is the corner-stone of Marx's economic theory.

Capital, created by the labour of the worker, crushes the worker, ruining small proprietors and creating an army of unemployed. In industry, the victory of large-scale production is immediately apparent, but the same phenomenon is also to be observed in agriculture, where the superiority of large-scale capitalist agriculture is enhanced, the use of machinery increases and the peasant economy, trapped by money-capital, declines and falls into ruin under the burden of its backward technique. The decline of small-scale production assumes different forms in agriculture, but the decline itself is an indisputable fact.

By destroying small-scale production, capital leads to an increase in productiv-

G. Lester

Friedrich Engels

ity of labour and to the creation of a monopoly position for the associations of big capitalists. Production itself becomes more and more social—hundreds of thousands and millions of workers become bound together in a regular economic organism—but the product of this collective labour is appropriated by a handful of capitalists. Anarchy of production, crises, the furious chase after markets and the insecurity of existence of the mass of the population are intensified.

By increasing the dependence of the workers on capital, the capitalist system creates the great power of united labour.

Marx traced the development of capitalism from embryonic commodity economy, from simple exchange, to its highest forms, to large-scale production.

And the experience of all capitalist countries, old and new, year by year demonstrates clearly the truth of this Marxian doctrine to increasing numbers of workers.

Capitalism has triumphed all over the world, but this triumph is only the prelude to the triumph of labour over capital.

III

When feudalism was overthrown and "***free***" capitalist society appeared in the world, it at once became apparent that this freedom meant a new system of oppression and exploitation of the working people. Various socialist doctrines immediately emerged as a reflection of and protest against this oppression. Early socialism, however, was ***utapian*** socialism. It criticised capitalist society, it condemned and damned it, it dreamed of its destruction, it had visions of a better order and endeavoured to convince the rich of the immorality of exploitation.

But utopian socialism could not indicate the real solution. It could not explain the real nature of wage-slavery under capitalism, it could not reveal the laws of capitalist development, or show what ***sacial force*** is capable of becoming the creator of a new society.

Meanwhile, the stormy revolutions which everywhere in Europe, and especially in France, accompanied the fall of feudalism, of serfdom, more and more clearly revealed the ***struggle of classes*** as the basis and the driving force of all development.

Not a single victory of political freedom over the feudal class was won except against desperate resistance. Not a single capitalist country evolved on a more or less free and democratic basis except by a life-and-death struggle between the various classes of capitalist society.

The genius of Marx lies in his having been the first to deduce from this the lesson world history teaches and to apply that lesson consistently. The deduction he made is the doctrine of the ***class struggle***.

People always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be until they have learnt to seek out the ***interests*** of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises. Champions of reforms and improvements will always be fooled by the defenders of the old order until they realise that every old institution, however barbarous and rotten it may appear to he, is kept guing by the forces of certain ruling classes. And there is ***anly one*** way of smashing the resistance of those classes, and that

Corbis

Adam Smith

is to find, in the very society which surrounds us, the forces which can—and, owing to their social position, ***must***—constitute the power capable of sweeping away the old and creating the new, and to enlighten and organise those forces for the struggle.

Marx's philosophical materialism alone has shown the proletariat the way out of the spiritual slavery in which all oppressed classes have hitherto languished. Marx's economic theory alone has explained the true position of the proletariat in the general system of capitalism.

Independent organisations of the proletariat are multiplying all over the world, from America to Japan and from Sweden to South Africa. The proletariat is becoming enlightened and educated by waging its class struggle; it is ridding itself of the prejudices of bourgeois society; it is rallying its ranks ever more closely and is learning to gauge the measure of its successes; it is steeling its forces and is growing irresistibly.■

This pamphlet reprints presentations given by SL Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are "150 Years of the Communist Manifesto" and "Marxism and Religion."

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the program and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

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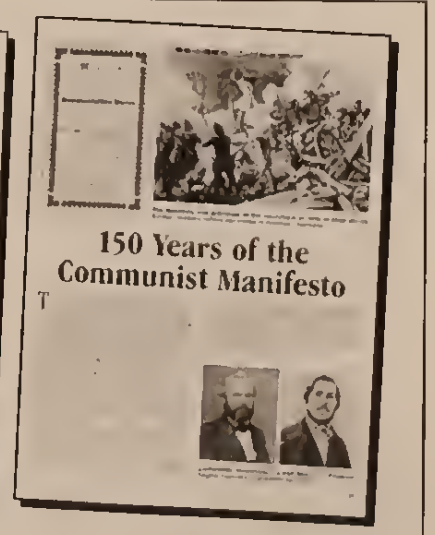

Britain...

(continued from page 12)

When German car manufacturer BMW summarily fired 850 workers in Cowley in February, Unite co-leader Tony Woodley declared his loyalty to British capitalism saying: "I not only speak for my members but I think for Britain, when I ask for a meeting with your company" (unitetheunion.com).

Until such time as workers revolution rips it from their hands, British industry belongs to the bloodsucking capitalists. The working class has no country! Nationalist protectionism doesn't save a single job, as former Rover workers sold down the river by Woodley can tell you. When BMW announced in 2000 it was pulling out of Rover in Birmingham, Woodley led a chauvinist anti-German demonstration with signs such as: "We won two world wars—let's win the third."

Workers Hammer

Ford Dagenham TGWU banner carried by black and Asian workers marching in support of 1984-85 miners strike. Mobilizing social power of multiethnic working class is counterposed to protectionism.

Socialist Party Wallows in Social Chauvinism

It is not surprising that Taaffe's Socialist Party—which is notorious for adapting to backward consciousness—has assumed the pre-eminent role as spokesman for the reactionary protests, peddling the lying claim that these strikes are *not* anti-immigrant. Socialist Party member Keith Gibson, who was part of the strike committee of the Lindsey strikes, claimed at a 13 February London public meeting that: "We turned this dispute from where the media wanted to go—looking at a racist agenda—to what we put forward, through discussions with other Socialist Party members, a clear class agenda" (*Socialist*, 19-25 February). Taaffe claims that the slogan "British jobs for British workers" was "a minor feature of the strike" (*Socialism Today*, March 2009) while a report on the Lindsey strike in the *Socialist* (5-11 February) says the BNP "have been bounced off from this strike." This is hardly the point. ***Why did the BNP support the strike?*** The Socialist Party bears its share of responsibility for leading a chauvinist campaign that has the enthusiastic support of the fascist BNP!

The Socialist Party's unique contribution to the Lindsey strike was to *replace* the demand "British jobs for British workers" with the demand for: "Union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled union members, with nominating rights as work becomes available." "Local union members" in this instance means "British workers." As our article on the strike noted, other Labourite left groups such as Workers Power and the [British] Socialist Workers Party (SWP) managed to take a correct position of opposition to the reactionary strikes. But for the SWP this was short-lived. Having correctly stated at the beginning that "these strikes are based around the wrong slogans and target the wrong people" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 January) the SWP has been circulating a petition which is as disingenuous as it is opportunist. On the one hand it declares:

> "The slogan 'British jobs for British workers' that has come to prominence around the dispute can only lead to deep divisions inside working class communities. The slogan, coined by Gordon Brown in his 2007 speech to Labour's conference, is being taken up by the right wing press and the Nazi BNP. These are forces that have always been bitterly hostile to the trade union movement."

However it goes on to say: "We support the demands of the Lindsey Oil Refinery strike committee" ("Unite to Fight for Jobs Petition" at petitiononline.com).

This petition is a grovelling capitulation to the Socialist Party and to the trade-union bureaucracy. The real, anti-foreigner meaning of the demands of the Lindsey strikers for preferential hiring of "local" union members is unmistakeable in the Unite newsletter's coverage of the strikes. The Spring 2009 issue approvingly quotes Steven Bright, an unemployed erector from Newark, who "believes foreign workers will send money home rather than spending it in the local community" and demands that the government must "stop foreign labour coming in to do work that we are qualified and available to do." The same article quotes Simpson saying "it will be a disgrace if UK workers are shut out from building their own power stations."

We insist that the concern of the trade-union movement must not he *whani* the building contractors hire, but *at what rate af pay and under what canditians they wark*. A genuine strike would undercut attempts by the bosses to "level down" the wages and working conditions of all workers by playing off one nationality against the other by demanding: ***Full unian pay far all work at the prevailing rate, na matter who daes the jab! Equal pay for equal wark!***

A strike for jobs for all in construction—i.e., including immigrant labour—would of necessity be *counterpased* to the current campaign, whose true face was shown at a Staythorpe protest in Newark, Nottinghamshire, on 24 February in which at least one demonstrator was wearing a Union Jack and a section of the demonstrators chanted "foreigners out." When a video of the demonstration appeared on YouTube the wretched Socialist Party was forced to admit the presence of racist elements, saying: "Disturbingly, a small minority of workers at the front of the march had chanted 'Foreigners out!'" (socialistparty.org.uk, 4 March). The Socialist Party does not claim that their members who were present uttered a peep of protest, much less tried to kick these thugs off the demonstration. It is notable that the petition being promoted by the SWP has been signed hy prominent Labour "lefts" and trade-union bureaucrats such as John McDonnell, Tony Woodley and Mark Serwotka, but not by Keith Gibson or any other prominent figure in the Socialist Party. This is presumably because of the petition's (mealy-mouthed) opposition to "British jobs for British workers."

Consistent opposition to these reactionary strikes requires a revolutionary internationalist programme and a perspective of mobilising the multiethnic working class in Britain in a struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the racist capitalist system. This is counterposed to the programme of the Socialist Party (and the SWP) whose "socialism" is merely old Labour's social-democratic programme based on a commitment to nationalised industry under capitalism while leaving the capitalist state intact. Labourite reformism is inherently protectionist, as can he seen starkly in today's cries for nationalisations to bail out "British" jobs and to minimise British capitalism's losses.

The working people in this country need a party that fights for their class interests, a workers party committed to sweeping away the hankrupt capitalist system through socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist order worldwide. We fight for a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, part of a Leninist-Trotskyist international. Socialist revolution will establish a workers state, ruled not through parliament but by soviets (or workers councils) and will lay the basis for rationally planned economies based on production for need, not for profit. This in turn will allow for development of the productive forces so that poverty, scarcity and want will be eliminated, thus laying the hasis for the creation of an egalitarian socialist society.

For a Socialist United States of Europe!

The worldwide economic crisis has opened up deep divisions within the European Union (EU). This was evident at the 1 March emergency summit at which Czech prime minister Mirek Topolanek, who currently holds the rotating EU presidency, was said to he fuming over French president Nicholas Sarkozy's proposal that in return for a government bail-out, French car makers should shut down plants in Eastern Europe and produce in France. An article in the [London] *Times* the day after the EU summit headlined, "New 'Iron Curtain' Will Split EU's Rich and Poor," claimed that "Twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Western leaders were told yesterday that five million johs could be lost in the 'new' European Union countries of the East unless radical action were taken to bail them out" (*Times*, 2 March).

As proletarian internationalists we oppose the EU, an imperialist consortium designed to improve the competitiveness of the European imperialists against their American and Japanese rivals, while grinding the working classes in Europe, including by intensifying racism against its minority component. We also opposed the eastward expansion of the EU into the former deformed workers states of Eastern Europe, which provided the European bourgeoisies with a vast supply of very cheap labour. At the same time we oppose work restrictions by Western European governments on workers from "new" EU member states.

The eastward expansion of the EU resulted from the capitalist counterrevolutions that swept Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1992 creating massive unemployment and social immiseration within these countries and across the world as a whole. We Trotskyists of the International Communist League fought to mobilise the working class in defence of the gains that those states embodied. This historic defeat for the workers and oppressed was supported by the SWP and the Socialist Party. The Taaffeites were on Yeltsin's barricades: the front-page headlines of their newspaper *Rabochaya Demokratiya* (October 1991) trumpeted: "Where We Were," "On the Barricades in Moscow" "And in Leningrad" (see *WV* No. 828, 11 June 2004).

The Taaffeites' sordid role in the "British jobs" campaign has prompted Workers Power to quit the Taaffeite "Campaign for a New Workers Party" (CNWP). This is truly a "day late and a dollar short." Workers Power walked out on 1 March when the majority voted for a Socialist Party motion hailing the Lindsey strike as a "victory for the working class." Only then did it dawn on the hapless Workers Power that the CNWP "has become little more than a front for the SP and a conduit for its politics" (Workers Power online bulletin, 10 March).

The current "British johs" campaign gives an accurate picture of what kind of "new workers party" the Taaffeites seek to build. But this is hardly news. The Taaffeites' politics—including support for counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and loyalty to "democratic" British imperialism and its police and prison guards, as well as social-chauvinism—are integral to Labour reformism. This is a programme which Workers Power shares. Like the Taaffeites, Workers Power was present on Yeltsin's barricades of counterrevolution in Moscow in 1991.

continued on page 10

Militant tendency's newspaper in Russia, *Rabochaya Demokratiya*, boasted support for counterrevolutionary Yeltsinite rabble: "On the Barricades in Moscow..." "...And in Leningrad."

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From Vietnam to Afghanistan

ISO: "Third Camp" Apologists for U.S. Imperialism

While President Barack Obama has been largely effective in his attempts to refurbish U.S. imperialism's image, sections of the U.S. ruling class are beginning to fret that he may have bitten off more than he can chew in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The *New York Times* (12 May) reported: "Already some prominent members of Congress—including from Obama's own party—are questioning whether Afghanistan is a lost cause." Over 50 Democrats in the House of Representatives defected on the final vote of the president's war funding bill. The Democratic chairman of the House Appropriations Committee repeatedly likened Obama's stance on Afghanistan to President Richard Nixon's Vietnam policy in the late 1960s.

Echoing such sentiment, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) ran on its Web site an article by Eamonn McCann, a prominent supporter of the Socialist Workers Party in Ireland, under the headline "Will Afghanistan be Obama's Vietnam?" McCann opined that Vietnam "may provide the precedent and parallel" to the Afghanistan war, from "the initial declaration of an idealistic motive" (!) to the "gathering anger and disillusionment at home."

The U.S. ruling class carried out the Vietnam War under the banner of "rolling back world Communism"—i.e., smashing the Vietnamese social revolution. That aim was indeed an "idealistic motive" to the ISO's predecessors in the mid 1960s, as it is to the viscerally anti-Communist ISO today.

We Spartacists were for the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution and raised the call, "All Indochina Must Go Communist!" Today we stand for the military defense of the deformed workers states of Vietnam, China, North Korea and Cuba against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a government based on elected workers and peasants councils.

The initial position of the ISO's predecessors, then organized in the International Socialist Clubs (ISC), on the Vietnam War was fully consistent with their position of the "third camp"—supposedly neither with the imperialists nor with the Vietnamese Stalinists and their Soviet allies, but in reality always with the imperialists. The ISC, while calling for U.S. withdrawal, advocated a "democratic foreign policy for the U.S." and "independent democratic movements" in Vietnam against the National Liberation Front (NLF) (*Independent Socialist*, January-February 1967). This was a reactionary "plague on both your houses" position based on the Cold War myth of "Soviet imperialism."

However, by the late 1960s, there was growing support among youth for the NLF's victory in the Vietnam War, as part of a broader radicalization in the U.S., which resulted from the Cuban Revolution and the civil rights movement. The ISO's predecessors found themselves increasingly unpopular as young leftists sought in various ways to solidarize with the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants, from identifying politically with Third World Stalinism and the writings of the Third World nationalist Frantz Fanon to embracing genuine Marxism (i.e., Trotskyism). In response, the ISO's predecessors "redefined" the Vietnam War as a struggle for national self-determination. This allowed them to call for military victory for the NLF, which was in utter contradiction with their underlying "third camp" politics. In fact, during the 1950-53 Korean War, carried out at the height of the Cold War, the forerunners of the ISC in Max Shachtman's International Socialist League refused to defend the Stalinist-led forces, claiming that their victory "would mean nothing but the extension of the slave power of Stalinism over the whole territory of Korea" (*New International*, July-August 1950).

WV Photo

SL banner at antiwar protest in Washington, D.C., January 1973. Spartacists fought for victory of Vietnamese workers and peasants.

To understand the roots of the ISO's anti-Communism, it is useful to look back at its history. The ISC grew out of the Socialist Party (SP), splitting away in 1964, following the SP's dissolution of its youth group for refusing electoral support to Democrat Lyndon Johnson.

In a sense, the ISC represented the political continuity of the old Workers Party (WP) of Max Shachtman. The most important expression of this continuity was the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, which saw the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy as a new type of ruling class. Shachtman had broken from the then-Trotskyist U.S. Socialist Workers Party in 1940 over his rejection of the Trotskyist position of unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state. Following their break with Trotskyism, the Shachtmanites pursued an uneven 18-year-long course to full-blown social democracy. Shachtman's WP maintained some pretenses to Marxism while the Soviet Union was relatively popular in its wartime alliance with U.S. imperialism against Nazi Germany in the Second World War. But as the Cold War intensified in the late 1940s, Shachtman's group—which became the International Socialist League in 1949—moved to the right in response to the prevailing pressures. This culminated in their liquidation into Norman Thomas' SP in 1958.

In 1961, Shachtman ended up an apologist for U.S. imperialism's Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. In the early 1960s, a section of Shachtman's supporters centered on Hal Draper—who opposed Shachtman's support for the Bay of Pigs invasion—formed the ISC as an educational appendage to the SP. But Draper stayed in the SP despite its support for U.S. machinations against Cuba and the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic and Vietnam. As the student protest movement grew more radical, the ISC gradually grew more "independent," renaming itself the International Socialists (I.S.).

The ISC/I.S. differed from the SP chiefly in that it used formal Marxist rhetoric about revolution, which the SP had long abandoned. While reviving Shachtman's theory of bureaucratic collectivism, the ISC/I.S. maintained a loose association with Tony Cliff's group in Britain, which advocated the equally pro-imperialist line that the USSR was "state capitalist" (see "The Bankruptcy of 'New Class' Theories," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 55, Autumn 1999). When, after a series of debilitating splits in the 1970s, the I.S. was reborn as the ISO, it was firmly in Cliff's orbit.

Driven by anti-Communism, the ISO denies that the victory of the workers and peasants of Vietnam against U.S. imperialism resulted in a ***social revolution***—that is, the overturn of capitalist property relations. An article by ISO leader Joel Geier bragged, "We knew the NLF would set up a state capitalist regime that would deny all democratic rights and powers to workers and peasants in order to better exploit them" (*International Socialist Review*, Summer 1999).

In fact, along with the army of the North Vietnamese deformed workers state, the workers and peasants of the South made monumental sacrifices because they were fighting not only for "national liberation," but to overthrow the rule of the landlords and capitalists. And they inflicted a major defeat on U.S. imperialism—i.e., a victory for the international proletariat.

For the ISO today to draw a parallel between the heroic workers and peasants of Vietnam and the fundamentalist-led forces in Afghanistan is simply grotesque. As proletarian-internationalist opponents of U.S. imperialism, we recognize that when the insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan aim their blows against the U.S. occupiers and their lackeys, such acts coincide with the interests of the international proletariat. But we do not imbue the forces presently organizing guerrilla attacks on U.S. forces with "anti-imperialist" credentials. We have repeatedly warned that in the absence of working-class struggle in Iraq and internationally against the occupation, the victory of one or another of the reactionary clerical forces is likely to come about through an alliance with U.S. imperialism.

In the name of "democracy," the ISO has always stood on the side of capitalist counterrevolution. They denounced the progressive Soviet intervention into Afghanistan (see article, page 1), tailing the cutthroat *mujahedin* reactionaries. The ISO has often had an affinity for Islamic fundamentalism, for example, supporting the reactionary 1979 "Islamic Revolution" in Iran.

When the Kremlin Stalinists criminally announced that they would pull out the Red Army's troops from Afghanistan, the ISO drew a grotesque parallel between the USSR, which was fighting on the side of social progress, and the U.S. imperialists' counterrevolutionary war to smash the Vietnamese social revolution, writing in *Socialist Worker* (May 1988): "Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs." This was a call by the ISO, in lockstep with the imperialists, for the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and East Europe. ■

Britain...

(continued from page 9)

Prior to the 2006 split with most of its founding cadre who formed Permanent Revolution (which today shamelessly supports the "British jobs" strikes) Workers Power perennially supported Labour in elections, a tradition upheld by both wings after the split. Old Labour in government sent British troops into Northern Ireland in 1969 to reinforce the viciously anti-Catholic RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] and in the 1970s Labour introduced vile anti-immigrant measures in Britain. Upholding this tradition, the Socialist Party has for decades refused to call for British troops out of Northern Ireland.

In Britain, a revolutionary party can only be built through opposition to Labourite reformism, which has served to tie the working class to the capitalist exploiters for over a century. [Former Prime Minister] Tony Blair began the process of remoulding the Labour Party from what Lenin termed a "bourgeois workers party." Labour today has gone some way towards becoming an openly bourgeois party and is moribund as a reformist party. Describing Blair's transformation of Labour, Peter Taaffe claims that "leaders like Tony Blair in Britain and their social-democratic cousins in Europe and elsewhere" went over "lock, stock and barrel to the side of the bourgeoisie in the aftermath of the collapse of Stalinism" (*Socialism Today*, March 2009).

Contrary to Taaffe, the *leaders* of the social-democratic parties went over "lock, stock and barrel" to the bourgeoisie at the outbreak of WWI in August 1914. The leaders of the social-democratic parties became what Lenin termed social-chauvinist for lining up the working class behind their "own" bourgeoisie. This is a fitting description of the Taaffeites today. Lenin fought intransigently to win the working-class base of these parties through a political *split* from the social-chauvinist camp in the workers movement, the camp of Labourism. He wrote: "***Opportunism and social-chauvinism have the same political content***, namely, class collaboration, repudiation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, repudiation of revolutionary action, unconditional acceptance of bourgeois legality, confidence in the bourgeoisie and lack of confidence in the proletariat. ***Social-chauvinism is the direct continuation and consummation of British liberal-labour politics***" ("Opportunism, and the Collapse of the Second International," 1915).

The ICL is dedicated to the task of reforging Trotsky's Fourth International, the necessary instrument to fight for new October Revolutions, through intransigent struggle against social democracy. As the world today is again riven by an economic crisis, rivalries among competing imperialist powers are heating up. We insist that the proletariat must be imbued with the programme of international solidarity and struggle that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels inscribed on the banner of the communist movement more than 160 years ago: "Workers of the World, Unite!" ■

Afghanistan...

(continued from page 1)

with a situation that threatens to spiral out of its control—alternates between repression and conciliation in dealing with the forces to whose destruction the American government is so committed. Meanwhile, the bulk of the Pakistani army remains in the eastern part of the country, arrayed against Pakistan's perennial main enemy (and fellow nuclear-armed state) India, locked together in intractable conflict over Kashmir.

Islamabad agreed early this year to grant fundamentalist militants free rein to impose *sharia* (Islamic law) in the Swat Valley, a lush (former) tourist site northwest of Islamabad. The truce broke down last month as fundamentalist forces moved out of Swat, routing government officials in the neighboring Buner district and coming to within 60 miles of the capital. Under intense pressure from the Obama administration, the Pakistani government announced on May 7 a military counteroffensive. Reportedly consisting largely of aerial bombardment from attack helicopters and fighter jets, the offensive has driven more than one million people from their homes, adding to the half million others who were displaced earlier by Pakistani "counterinsurgency" operations in the northwestern tribal areas.

Our standpoint is one of proletarian class opposition to the U.S. capitalist rulers and to the imperialist system as a whole. Thus, we forthrightly called for the military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against imperialist attack in the 2001 and 2003 invasions, without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats or the bloody capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. We underlined that every victory for the imperialists in their military adventures encourages more predatory wars; every setback serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed the world over. We call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops and bases from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia!

Obama: Refurbishing U.S. Imperialism's Image

In an article posted (22 April) on the Web site of the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO), Eamonn McCann, a prominent supporter of the Socialist Workers Party in Ireland, snidely remarked that the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan is "what many Americans, naively perhaps, trusted would happen when they swarmed to give Obama their votes" (see article, page 10). Of course, the ISO was among those that "swarmed" (not at all naively) to support Obama. The day after Obama's inauguration, the ISO published an editorial titled, "Looking Forward to Change," and declared that Obama's election showed that "some of the cruel sins of America's past were finally being overcome" (*Socialist Worker* online, 21 January).

Obama has merely sought to clean up some of the most blatant excesses of Bush-Cheney's "war on terror"—for example, by promising to close the U.S. prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, within a year. At the same time, he is continuing the Bush regime's underlying policies. Most significant is Obama's endorsement of indefinite detention, a hallmark of police-state dictatorships and the centerpiece of Bush's war on democratic rights. While moving to greatly expand the prison at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan, the Obama administration has argued in U.S. court the Bush line that prisoners at Bagram have no legal right to challenge their detention.

Many of the Guantánamo detainees will in fact not be released—they will be transferred to detention centers in Bagram and elsewhere. Last week, Obama announced that some of those held in detention centers would be tried in kangaroo-court military commissions based on those set up by the Bush administration. While Obama promised during the electoral campaign to "reject" these tribunals, he is now arguing that they are "the best way to protect our country" (*New York Times*, 16 May). Military defense lawyer Major David Frakt, in an interview with Rachel Maddow (MSNBC, 15 May), declared that Obama was proposing only "minor tweaks" to the military commissions and that hearsay and "coerced evidence" would still be "broadly admissible."

AP

Refugees from Pakistani army offensive against Taliban in Swat Valley line up for food in Swabi, northwest Pakistan, May 14.

A staunch supporter of the "war on terror," Obama voted as a Senator for an earlier version of the military commissions law, as well as for warrantless wiretapping and the renewal of the USA Patriot Act. Last week, he moved to block the release of photos documenting abuse of prisoners in Afghanistan and Iraq. He also sought to have the British High Court suppress evidence of the hideous tortures inflicted on Binyam Mohamed, who was imprisoned in Pakistan, Morocco, Afghanistan and Guantánamo, before being released earlier this year. Renewing a threat made previously by the Bush administration, Obama warned that if details of Mohamed's treatment were revealed, Washington would curb the exchange of intelligence information with Britain. Earlier, the Obama administration unsuccessfully tried to get a U.S. federal appeals court to throw out a civil suit brought by Mohamed and four other men against a Boeing subsidiary for flying them to secret prisons where they could be tortured, as part of the CIA's policy of "extraordinary rendition." We say: Immediate freedom for all detainees! U.S. out of Guantánamo!

Obama Intensifies Afghan Occupation

The U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 was embraced by liberals and Democrats as a "just" response to the September 11 terror attacks. In reality, the invasion of Afghanistan represented the launching of U.S. imperialism's "war on terror," an all-purpose pretext for imperialist war and plunder internationally and a war on immigrants, black people and labor at home. Contrary to what the ISO and other reformists claimed in promoting Obama's "antiwar" credentials in Iraq, the purpose of reducing U.S. occupation troops in that country—as Obama himself has repeatedly made clear—is to intensify the occupation of Afghanistan.

Thus, to reportedly provide a "fresh approach" in Afghanistan, Obama last week named Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, a "counterinsurgency" specialist, to head U.S. forces there (*New York Times*, 15 May). From 2003 to 2008, McChrystal led the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC), which heads the military's "special missions" units. A United Nations report in February specifically pointed to clandestine operations by commando units in accounting for the growing number of civilian deaths in Afghanistan, either directly by carrying out commando raids or by calling in airstrikes in support of those raids.

McChrystal's JSOC oversaw a squad of U.S. special forces in Iraq that ran a torture center named Camp Nama near the Baghdad airport. Witnesses have described beatings of detainees there frequently resulting in broken bones, as well as burn marks on prisoners and electric shocks with stun guns. (An investigation into Camp Nama stalled after a "computer malfunction" destroyed 70 percent of its records.)

As head of JSOC, McChrystal was a key advocate of a plan, approved by President Bush last summer, to use American commandos to strike at fundamentalist forces inside Pakistan. That resulted in a raid by JSOC forces last September in Pakistan's South Waziristan tribal area, which, unlike several previous cross-border commando raids carried out during the rule of former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf, provoked a furious response from Islamabad. One U.S. government official, calling it a "strategic miscalculation," declared (armytimes.com, 29 September 2008):

> "Once the Pakistanis started talking about closing down our supply routes, and actually demonstrated they could do it, once they started talking about shooting American helicopters, we obviously had to take seriously that maybe this [approach] was not going to be good enough."

JSOC under McChrystal was also responsible for covert operations against Iran carried out by U.S. commandos operating from Iraq. According to investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, these included "seizing members of Al Quds, the commando arm of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, and taking them to Iraq for interrogation, and the pursuit of 'high-value targets' in the President's war on terror, who may be captured or killed" (*New Yorker*, 7 July 2008). In summary, as the *New York Times* (13 May) noted, McChrystal "is ideally suited to carry out a White House strategy that regards Afghanistan and Pakistan as part of a single, urgent problem."

ISO Opposed Social Progress in Afghanistan

Largely the creation of the Pakistani military and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) as well as the American CIA, the Taliban and Al Qaeda are Frankenstein's monsters turned on their former masters. The U.S., Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, among others, armed, funded and trained reactionary *mujahedin* (holy warriors) to kill Soviet soldiers following the entry of the Red Army into Afghanistan in 1979 at the request of the modernizing nationalist PDPA regime. The Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan was one of the few genuinely progressive acts carried out by the Stalinist bureaucracy, opening the vista of social liberation to the downtrodden Afghan peoples.

Despite its degeneration under a Stalinist bureaucratic caste, the Soviet Union remained a workers state embodying historic gains of the October Revolution of 1917, centrally the planned economy and collectivized property. These represented enormous gains, not least for women and the historically Muslim peoples of Soviet Central Asia, where conditions before the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution had been as backward and benighted as in Afghanistan. As Trotskyists, we stood for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution. A key expression of our defense was our call for workers political revolution to oust the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy and replace it with a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

In dreadfully backward Afghanistan, lacking even a working class, the Red Army represented the only real basis for social progress. A Red Army victory and a prolonged Soviet presence in the country posed the extension of the social gains of the October Revolution to Afghanistan, transforming it along the lines of Soviet Central Asia. The international Spartacist tendency, now the International Communist League, said: "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples.

The U.S. imperialists seized on the Red Army intervention to intensify their revived anti-Soviet crusade ("Cold War II"). As the CIA undertook its biggest covert operation ever in support of the "holy warrior" *mujahedin* (including one Osama bin Laden), Afghanistan became the front line of the imperialists' drive to destroy the Soviet Union. Like the bulk of the left internationally, the anti-Communist ISO and its then-parent group in Britain, Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP), criminally stood foursquare with the imperialists. The 12 January 1980 issue of the SWP's *Socialist Worker* blared against the Red Army: "Troops Out of Afghanistan!"

By the mid 1980s, the Red Army—which had the support of sections of the population, especially in the cities—had the reactionary *mujahedin* militarily on the run. When then-Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, in a vain attempt to appease the imperialists, withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, we denounced this crime against the Afghan and Soviet peoples. The betrayal by the Kremlin bureaucracy opened the road to *mujahedin* rule in Afghanistan and prepared the ground for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state itself in 1991-92. This was celebrated by the ISO and its international cothinkers, who crowed, "Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991).

As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky taught, you can't win new gains without defending those already won. The capitalist counterrevolution welcomed by the imperialists and their social-democratic lackeys like the ISO was a world-historic defeat for the international proletariat, creating a "one superpower" world and paving the way for the brutal wars against Iraq and Afghanistan. We seek to win the multiracial U.S. working class to the understanding that its interests are counterposed to those of its "own" ruling class and its state and political parties. Thus we fight to break the proletariat's allegiance to the Democratic Party, which has long been promoted by the pro-capitalist trade-union tops and the reformist left. This is key to our purpose: the forging of a revolutionary workers party that fights for the defeat of U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution.■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With Protectionist Poison!

Britain: Labourites Whitewash Chauvinist Strikes

The following article is reprinted from *Workers Hammer* No. 206 (Spring 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). It centrally deals with the support given by pro-Labour Party reformist "socialists" to a series of reactionary strikes earlier this year directed against foreign-born work-

WORKERS HAMMER

ers. In virtually all major capitalist countries, the union tops have responded to mass layoffs and unemployment with chauvinism and calls for increasing protectionism. Just as in Britain, the struggle against such poison is vital to working people in the U.S. and throughout the world. As our comrades of the SL/B wrote in "Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!" (*WV* No. 930, 13 February):

> "For the bourgeoisie, 'free trade' and protectionism are options they can debate, but for the proletariat, protectionism is poison. It is a classic means of channelling discontent over job losses into hostility towards foreign workers and immigrants while building illusions in the benevolence of our 'own' capitalists....
>
> "There is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialised economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problem of poverty, scarcity and want."

* * *

With the workers of the world confronting the most severe world economic crisis since the Great Depression, a wave of virulently chauvinist strikes against foreign workers has swept building sites at Britain's oil refineries and power stations. Demanding "British jobs for British workers," a slogan long associated with the fascists, these protests are playing the bosses' game—lining workers up with [Prime Minister] Gordon Brown and the British capitalist rulers against immigrant workers.

PA

Paul Mattsson

Above: Protectionist rally against foreign workers at Lindsey oil refinery, January 30. Left: Socialist Party's Keith Gibson, member of strike committee, was instrumental in building reactionary strikes.

The reactionary character of the protests is blindingly obvious from the settlement reached at Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire in February. Brokered by the arbitration service ACAS, the deal included a pledge by management that 102 jobs that were previously expected to go to Italian workers will now be offered to British workers. This shameful deal is hailed by Peter Taaffe's Socialist Party [affiliated with Socialist Alternative in the U.S.] as a victory and held up as a model for the Staythorpe power station in Nottinghamshire, where protests against Spanish and Polish workers are ongoing. Meanwhile protests against Polish workers have taken place at the Isle of Grain in Kent. The outcome of the Lindsey strikes confirms our statement that: "The strikes were not intended to secure more jobs or indeed any gains for the working class as a whole, nor to defend existing jobs. They were about redividing the existing pool of jobs according to the nationality of the workers" (see *WV* No. 930, 13 February).

This "British jobs" crusade is so alien to the interests of the multiethnic working class that it has been supported by the xenophobic, anti-working-class gutter press. Thus the 16 February London *Evening Standard* whipped up a storm against foreign-born workers who are registered as "local" and working on building sites for the 2012 Olympics, fulminating that: "The Evening Standard found people from various eastern European backgrounds employed [at] the Stratford site, as well as workers of Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese origin." During the Lindsey strike, Italian workers living in fear of their lives were told to go back to their own country by racist strikers. Meanwhile the government plans to augment their racist immigration laws, imposing even more restrictions on the rights of immigrants.

This month marks the 25th anniversary of the start of the miners strike of 1984-85, and the contrast between today's construction strikes and the miners heroic battle couldn't be clearer. The striking miners came up against the full force of the capitalist state and are still being vilified by the capitalist press to this day. At the same time the embattled miners became a tribune of the oppressed layers in society: women of the coalfields, Britain's oppressed black and Asian minorities as well as gay and lesbian organisations backed the strike against the hated Thatcher government. In contrast to the vile nationalism prevalent at Lindsey and Staythorpe, the miners strike inspired magnificent displays of proletarian internationalism from workers across national lines: French trade unions as well as workers in Ireland, elsewhere in Europe, South Africa and the Soviet Union sent material aid to the miners and their families.

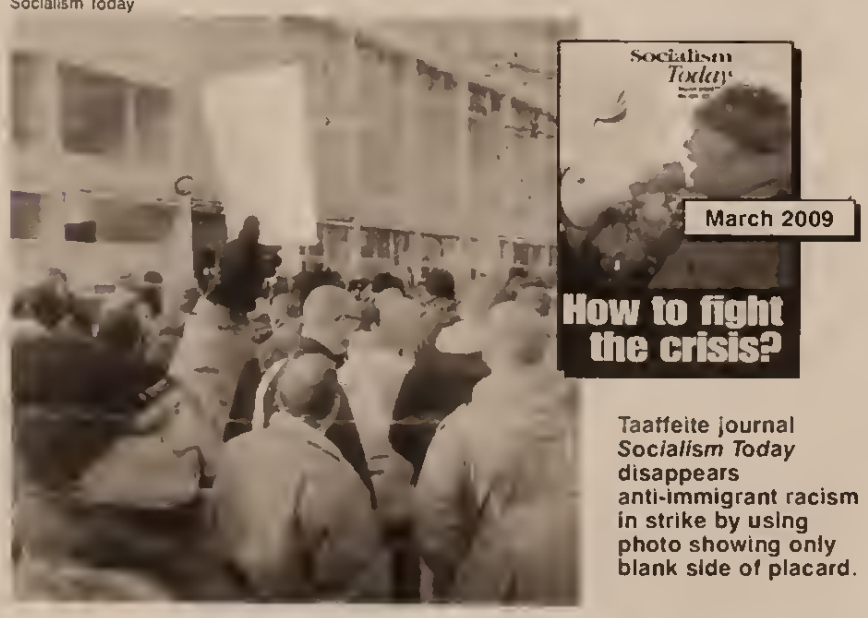
In the face of today's worldwide assault on jobs, the urgent need is to mobilise the strength of the trade unions in a class-struggle fight ***against*** the capitalist bosses, Brown's Labour government and ***in opposition to*** the trade-union bureaucracy. A genuine struggle to defend the interests of the multiethnic working class would demand a shorter working week with no loss in pay and a sliding scale of wages and hours. This would be counterposed to the current campaign pitting British workers against foreign workers and fuelling anti-immigrant racism. Scandalously Derek Simpson, co-leader of the Unite union, has backed this campaign, spewing poisonous rhetoric while posing beside the Union Jack, the racist emblem of the Empire in colonial times, symbol of the subjugation of Catholics in Northern Ireland today and of the bloody occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. As we said in our last issue:

> "It is vitally necessary for the unions to fight against racism. Labour's vaunted 'flexible economy' is heavily dependent on immigrant workers, who work for pitiful wages and face a climate of racist hostility. The government's 'war on terror' has led to increased racism against Muslims, who are concentrated among the poorest section of the working class. Particularly in the context of recession, attacks on immigrant workers are increasing. The union Unite recently protested at the decision of subcontractors working at Staythorpe power station near Newark to employ only overseas workers on the job while refusing to hire any local workers. A demonstration outside the power station evoked Gordon Brown's call at the GMB union conference in 2007 for 'British workers for British jobs'—a slogan associated with the fascists. We vehemently oppose such divide-and-rule ploys, pitting workers of different countries against each other. We say the trade unions must fight for ***full citizenship rights for all immigrants!***"
>
> —*Workers Hammer* No. 205, Winter 2008-2009

Far from organising a defence of jobs, about the ***only*** thing the trade-union bureaucracy is offering the working class is an endless stream of chauvinist rhetoric about British jobs, but ***no*** class-struggle fight against the capitalist order that plunged the world into this dire economic state. With the world's largest car makers announcing tens of thousands of redundancies [layoffs] around the world, the Unite bureaucracy in Britain called on the government "to support UK manufacturing and the UK car sector" (tgwu.org.uk).

continued on page 9

Socialism Today



Taaffeite journal *Socialism Today* disappears anti-immigrant racism in strike by using photo showing only blank side of placard.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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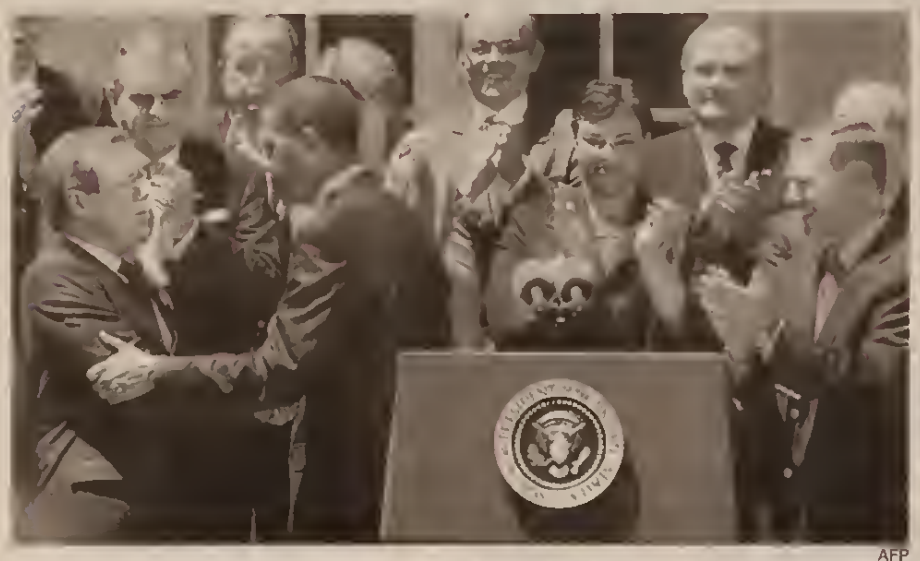
UAW Tops Enforce Obama's Raw Deal



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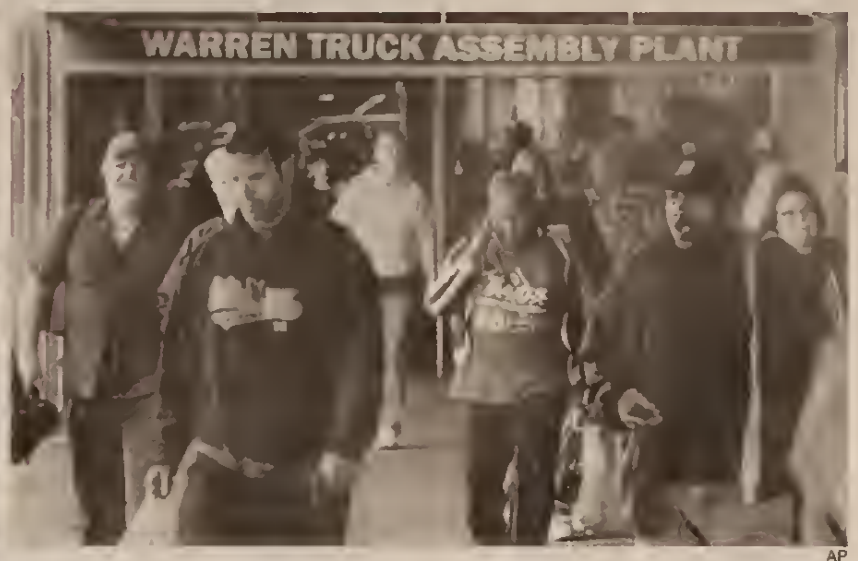

AP

Left: UAW president Ron Gettelfinger shakes hands with President Barack Obama last month as worldwide auto executives and U.S. government officials applaud. Right: UAW workers leave Chrysler's truck assembly plant in Warren, Michigan.

Wall Street, Washington Shaft Auto Workers

JUNE 2—Global auto giant General Motors, for decades one of the pillars of American capitalism, yesterday followed Chrysler into Chapter 11 bankruptcy under the guiding hand of President Barack Obama's Wall Street cronies in his "auto task force." The plunge in sales brought on by a global economy going to hell left the automakers scrambling for federal aid to stave off financial ruin. From the outset, we have opposed the bailout of the auto bosses, underlining that it "will be purchased through the further destruction of the jobs and livelihoods of working people" ("Bosses Declare War on UAW Workers," *WV* No. 926, 5 December 2008). This is precisely what's on order with the GM and Chrysler bankruptcies—to reshape the industry to again make it a lucrative source of profits for Wall Street by breaking the back of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union.

Obama, whose election was bankrolled to the tune of $5 million by the sellouts who head the UAW, celebrated "the beginning of a new G.M." But for tens of thousands of auto workers it is the end of the line. Under the "bailout" deal, GM and Chrysler have announced that they will shut down 20 to 28 plants. The UAW, which was once the symbol of union power in the U.S., will be a shadow of its former self. The UAW's membership has already withered from a high of 1.6 million in the 1960s to less than 500,000 today, with a scant 140,000 working for the Big Three (GM, Ford and Chrysler). In the 1970s, GM alone employed nearly 400,000 workers. With the plant closings the workforce will be reduced to fewer than 40,000. The gutting of the UAW is a heavy blow against all workers, organized and unorganized.

The UAW misleaders are helping to foot the bill for "restructuring" the automakers—at the cost of tens of thousands of jobs—by accepting worthless stock in GM and Chrysler to fund over half the union's retiree health care trust (itself a sellout brokered in the 2007 contract to save the company $3 billion a year in health care costs). The head of the "New GM" boasted that this was a "defining moment" that would, as the *New York Times* (2 June) noted, allow the company "to 'permanently' unshackle itself from the cost of supporting hundreds of thousands of retirees." Those "lucky" enough to keep their jobs will be shackled by a "no strike" pledge for the next six years while the auto bosses continue to hack away at their wages and benefits to bring them into line with labor costs at non-union auto plants.

Here is the bitter fruit of the trade-union bureaucracy's program of class collaboration, which has long tied the interests of the unions to the profitability of their capitalist exploiters. "I'm very comfortable," UAW head Ron Gettelfinger told National Public Radio on May 1, the day after Chrysler entered Chapter 11, "It's not like we're going into this bankruptcy fighting with Chrysler and [merger partner] Fiat and the U.S. Treasury. We're going in there in lockstep to put our agreements in place."

Gettelfinger's agreements make the union joint stockholders in bankrupt GM and Chrysler. An article in the *New York Times* (2 June) titled "G.M.'s New Owners, U.S. and Labor, Adjust to Roles," pointed to "industry experts" who "predict that the union, far more than before, will help management increase profitability—with the goal of pushing up the automakers' stock prices." In other words, as a "co-owner" the UAW will directly have a hand in ratcheting up the rate of exploitation of its own remaining members.

The attacks on the UAW highlight the attacks on all workers, in the U.S. and internationally, amid the world economic

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Nuclear Test Rattles Imperialists

Defend North Korean Deformed Workers State!

MAY 31—North Korea's successful May 25 test of a nuclear weapon, reported to be substantially more powerful than a weapon tested in 2006, caused howls of outrage from the U.S. imperialists, who wield their nuclear arsenal as a threat against any regime that gets in their way. Over the next few days, Pyongyang carried out test launchings of several short-range missiles off the North Korean coast. North Korea has also reactivated its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, which the imperialists had earlier pressured it to dismantle. From the moment landlord-capitalist rule was overturned over 60 years ago, the North Korean deformed workers state has been in the gun sights of both Democratic and Republican Party administrations. It was under Democrat Bill Clinton that the U.S. prepared to bomb North Korean nuclear facilities in 1994. The Spartacist League/U.S., section of the International Communist League, supports North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons and development of effective delivery systems as a necessary defense and deterrent against the imperialists.

The bloody U.S. imperialists and their allies responded to the recent North Korean tests by immediately ramping up threats, with the Obama administration promising to "take action." Defense Secretary Robert Gates declared that the U.S. "will not stand idly by" as Pyongyang develops nuclear capability. The imperialists have also threatened increased United Nations sanctions and the interception of North Korean ships. In 2001, the Japanese coast guard sank a North Korean vessel in Chinese waters, claiming it was a spy ship.

The idiosyncratic Stalinist regime of North Korea is very rationally seeking to arm itself against the bloodiest power on earth. The U.S. is the only country to have ever used nuclear weapons—incinerating 200,000 Japanese in Hiroshima and Nagasaki out of racist spite and to send a message to the Soviet Union in the opening shot of the Cold War. As Seumas Milne wrote in the London

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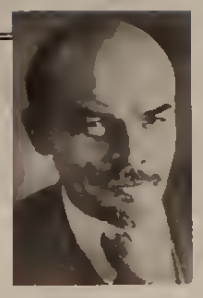
TROTSKY

Franz Mehring: *On Historical Materialism*


LENIN

Marxists seek to understand the world in order to change it. Our aim is the forging of workers parties to overthrow the capitalist profit system through proletarian revolutions worldwide, ushering in an egalitarian socialist society. In his 1893 pamphlet, On Historical Materialism, *excerpted below, Franz Mehring drew on the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and advanced an appraisal of conceptions and thoughts as subordinate but integral elements of the material social structure. A brilliant historian and theoretician, Mehring was also an outstanding communist. When the German Social Democracy aligned with its "own" bourgeoisie in World War I, Franz Mehring—already well into his sixties—picked up the banner of revolutionary internationalism along with Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, including by joining them in founding the German Communist Party in December 1918. Mehring died on 29 January 1919, shortly after the murder of his comrades, Luxemburg and Liebknecht.*

* * *

Let us glance once again at the accusations and objections which have been made against historical materialism: that it denies all ideal forces, that it makes humanity the helpless plaything of a mechanical development, that it rejects all moral standards.

Historical materialism is no closed system crowned by an ultimate truth; it is the scientific method for the investigation of processes of human development. It starts from the unchallengeable fact, that human beings do not only live in nature but also in society. There have never been people in isolation; every man who accidentally loses contact with human society, quickly starves and dies. But historical materialism thus recognizes all ideal forces in the widest context. "Of everything that happens in nature, nothing happens as a desired, conscious purpose. On the other hand, in the history of society, the participants are nothing but human beings endowed with consciousness, acting with thought and passion, working for specific purposes; nothing happens without a conscious intention, without a planned goal.... Will is determined through thought or passion. But the levers which in turn determined the passion or the thought are of very different kinds. They can be outside objects or ideal motives, greed, 'enthusiasm for truth and justice,' personal hatred or just individual peculiarities of all kinds" (Engels). This is the essential difference between the history of the development of nature on the one hand and of society on the other. But apparently all the innumerable conflicts of individual actions and wills in history only lead to the same result as the unconscious, blind agencies in nature. On the surface of history accident seems to reign as much as on the surface of nature. "Only rarely does what is desired take place; in most cases, the desired aims cut across each other, and come into conflict, or these aims are from the beginning impossible or lacking in means." But when, through the interplay of all the blind accidents which appear to dominate in unconscious nature, a general law of movement nevertheless imposes itself—only then does the question arise whether the thoughts and desires of consciously acting human beings are also dominated by such a law.

And the law is to be found, if one searches for it, through which the ideal driving forces of human beings are set into motion. A human being can only reach consciousness in a social relationship, thinking and acting with consciousness; the social grouping of which he is part awakens and directs his spiritual forces. The basis of all social community, however, is the form of production of material life, and this determining also in the last analysis the spiritual life process, in its manifold reflections. Historical materialism, far from denying the ideal forces, studies them down to their very

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Niemeyer

Welter Gircke

Left: Franz Mehring. Right: Demonstration in Berlin, December 1918, demands, "All Power to the Workers and Soldiers Councils." As Spartacists led struggle for workers power, Social Democratic regime drowned proletarian revolution in blood.

Letter

On Big Cars and Big Oil

Los Angeles
22 November 2008

Dear Comrades,

Given the present pass we are probably headed into a period of intensified protectionism particularly here in the U.S. There also seems to be afoot a drive for "oil independence." So while it's not a huge deal I wanted to raise a caution about a formulation in a front-page article, "UAW Must Fight GM/Delphi!" in *WV* No. 857 (28 October 2005). Near the end of the article we say: "That's fundamentally why GM keeps building gas-guzzling, unsafe models like the notorious tip-over SUVs, and why it's quality Japanese and German autos that consumers increasingly want to buy."

Well first of all, although the fortunes of Detroit did focus on big SUVs and trucks there are any number of gas-guzzling tip-over SUVs and trucks that are made by non-U.S. auto manufacturers. BMW X5 SUVs, the Audi Q7, Toyota's Sequoia (with a big V-8), and of course the Nissan Armada come to mind. And while it's true a lot of people prefer to buy cars that are of higher quality (which aren't made in the U.S.), auto manufacturers made those SUVs and trucks because a lot of people were willing to pay a premium to own them. If the price of gas hadn't gone through the roof and jobs weren't disappearing at a massive rate working people would still buy a lot of them. They're big and they are comfortable and out here in the West and "Middle America" they get driven a lot. Try to drive a few hundred miles nonstop in a Toyota Corolla. And here in L.A. for example, despite the tip-over problem I'd rather be in a Ford Excursion than a Corolla in a freeway accident. In fact a really gas-guzzling armored Humvee would be nice.

But to bigger matters. That section of the U.S. ruling class that is behind pushing fuel-efficient cars is doing it not just to destroy the UAW. There are concerns for the position of U.S. imperialism here too. Before we write our next big article on Detroit I think comrades should review "The World Oil Racket" in *WV* No. 535 (27 September 1991) and "Imperialist Aims Behind Carter's 'Energy Crisis'" in *WV* No. 158 (20 May 1977). While the world is obviously a different place than when we wrote those articles I think a lot of what's in them is still very relevant.

Comradely,
Larry A.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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CORRECTION

In the article "ISO: 'Third Camp' Apologists for U.S. Imperialism" (*WV* No. 937, 22 May), we incorrectly referred to Max Shachtman's Independent Socialist League as the "International Socialist League." We also incorrectly referred to the 1960s Independent Socialist Clubs as "International Socialist Clubs"; these were the predecessor organizations that formed the International Socialists in 1969.

The Civil War: The Second American Revolution

Honor Abraham Lincoln!

The following was written as a contribution for a Spartacist League internal educational series.

By Bert Mason

February 12 marked the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Since the days of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, revolutionaries have held Lincoln in high esteem. His world-historic achievement—the single most important event in American history—was to lead the North in a horrendously bloody civil war that smashed the Southern Confederacy and abolished slavery in the United States. In "Comments on the North American Events" (7 October 1862), Marx wrote with characteristic eloquence:

> "Lincoln is a *sui generis* figure in the annals of history. He has no initiative, no idealistic impetus, no cothurnus [dignified, somewhat stilted style of ancient tragedy], no historical trappings. He gives his most important actions always the most commonplace form. Other people claim to be 'fighting for an idea,' when it is for them a matter of square feet of land. Lincoln, even when he is motivated by an idea, talks about 'square feet.' He sings the bravura aria of his part hesitatively, reluctantly and unwillingly, as though apologising for being compelled by circumstances 'to act the lion.'...
>
> "Lincoln is not the product of a popular revolution. This plebeian, who worked his way up from stonebreaker to Senator in Illinois, without intellectual brilliance, without a particularly outstanding character, without exceptional importance—an average person of good will, was placed at the top by the interplay of the forces of universal suffrage unaware of the great issues at stake. The new world has never achieved a greater triumph than by this demonstration that, given its political and social organisation, ordinary people of good will can accomplish feats which only heroes could accomplish in the old world!"

Many opponents of revolutionary Marxism, from black nationalists to reformist leftists, have made a virtual cottage industry out of the slander that "Honest Abe" was a racist or even a white-supremacist. The reformist who impugns Lincoln for his bourgeois conceptions, which in fact reflected his time, place and position, does not hesitate for a moment to ally with unctuous "progressives" today who praise "diversity" while fighting tooth and nail to maintain the racial oppression and anti-immigrant chauvinism that are endemic to this most brutal of imperialist countries.

Take the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). In *Cold Truth, Liberating Truth: How This System Has Always Oppressed Black People, And How All Oppression Can Finally Be Ended*, a pamphlet originally published in 1989 and reprinted in *Revolution* (17 February 2008), the RCP writes:

> "It is a lie that 'Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves' because he was morally outraged over slavery. Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves (and not all the slaves at first, but only those in the states that had joined the southern Confederacy) because he saw that it would be impossible to win the Civil War against that southern Confederacy without freeing these slaves and allowing them to fight in the Union army. "Lincoln spoke and acted for *the bourgeoisie*—the factory-owners, railroad-owners, and other capitalists centered in the North—and he conducted the war *in their interests*" (emphasis in original).

Aside from the scurrilous suggestion that Lincoln was not an opponent of slavery who abhorred that "peculiar institution," the RCP rejects Marxist materialism in favor of liberal moralizing, denying that against the reactionary class of slaveholders and the antiquated slave system, the Northern capitalists represented a revolutionary class whose victory was in the interests of historical progress. Presenting the goals of the North and South as equally rapacious, the RCP neither sides with the North nor characterizes its victory as the consummation of a social revolution.

Indeed, the Civil War—the Second American Revolution—was the last of the great bourgeois revolutions, which began with the English Civil War of the 17th century and found their culmination in the French Revolution of the 18th. For the RCP, however, there is no contradiction whatsoever in condemning Lincoln as a representative of the 19th-century American bourgeoisie while doing everything in its power to embrace bourgeois liberalism today—from its antiwar coalitions with capitalist spokesmen to its implicit support for the Democratic Party and Barack Obama in the name of "drive out the Bush regime."

F.B. Carpenter

Chicago History Museum

Above: President Abraham Lincoln presents to his cabinet the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring freedom for slaves in the Confederate states and opening black enlistment in U.S. military. Right: 1863 recruitment poster for black troops.

Abraham Lincoln: Bourgeois Revolutionary

In the preface to his 1859 book, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Karl Marx wrote that in studying the transformation of the whole immense superstructure that arises from revolutionary changes in the economic foundation:

> "It is always necessary to distinguish between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, artistic or philosophic—in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. Just as one does not judge an individual by what he thinks about himself, so one cannot judge such a period of transformation by its consciousness, but, on the contrary, this consciousness must be explained from the contradictions of material life, from the conflict existing between the social forces of production and the relations of production. No social formation is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society."

The American Civil War was a bourgeois revolution, and Lincoln was both bourgeois and revolutionary at the same time—with all the contradictions this implies. Because the task of the Second American Revolution was to eradicate an antiquated social system based on chattel slavery and erect in its place the dominion of industrial capitalism based on wage labor from one end of the North American landmass to the other, it could not eradicate every form of class and social oppression—the hallmark of all propertied classes throughout the history of class society. As materialists, Marxists do not judge historical figures primarily based on the ideas in their heads but on how well they fulfilled the tasks of their epoch. While Lincoln had bourgeois conceptions—how could it be otherwise!—he was uniquely qualified to carry out the task before him, and in the last analysis he rose to the occasion as no other. That is the essence of his historical greatness.

While bestowing begrudging praise on Lincoln's achievements with the left hand, the leftist critic often takes it back with the right. Lincoln, the critic will admit, opposed slavery; he came to see that a hard war was necessary and prepared to issue his Emancipation Proclamation. However, the critic is more concerned with Lincoln's *attitudes* than his deeds: Lincoln was not John Brown, he was not Frederick Douglass, he was not Marx and Engels, he was not even as left-wing as his Treasury secretary Salmon P. Chase. For example, while Lincoln agreed with John Brown in thinking slavery wrong, he could not excuse Brown's violence, bloodshed and "acts of treason" in attempting to seize the arsenal at Harper's Ferry to spark a slave rebellion on the eve of the Civil War. Finally, the critic will argue, while Marx and Engels from 3,000 miles away knew that the American Civil War was about slavery, Lincoln and the Republicans sought to ignore the root of the problem and wage the conflict on constitutional grounds to save the Union. Such facts are indisputable, but they must be seen in their historical context.

In his *Abraham Lincoln* (2009), James M. McPherson remarks:

> "Only after years of studying the powerful crosscurrents of political and military pressures on Lincoln did I come to appreciate the skill with which he steered between the numerous shoals of conservatism and radicalism, free states and slave states, abolitionists, Republicans, Democrats, and border-state Unionists to maintain a steady course that brought the nation to victory—and the abolition of slavery—in the end. If he had moved decisively against slavery in the war's first year, as radicals pressed him to do, he might well have fractured his war coalition, driven border-state Unionists over to the Confederacy, lost the war, and witnessed the survival of slavery for at least another generation."

Facing innumerable pressures when the war broke out in April 1861, Lincoln grappled with how to respond to them. But the pressures—as intense as they were—were not merely strategic in nature. As the president of a constitutional republic, Lincoln believed that it was his duty to uphold the Constitution and the rule of law. While he detested slavery, he believed it was not his right to abolish it. That ideology flowed from the whole bourgeois constitutional framework of the United States.

In the first year of the war, Lincoln pursued a policy of conciliating the four border slave states—Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri—in an effort to retain their loyalty to the Union. Marx and Engels criticized this policy because it weakened the Union's war effort and emboldened the slaveholders. However, did this policy stem from disdain for the enslaved black masses or from a desire on Lincoln's part to let bygones be bygones—i.e., coexist with the slave South? No. It flowed from the whole previous history of the United States. In 1776, 1800 and even as late as 1820, the North and South had similar values and institutions. With the Industrial Revolution, however, the North surged ahead in virtually every area—railroads, canals, literacy, inventions—while the South stagnated. Yet the two regions remained part of the same nation, setting the stage for compromise

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Frederick Douglass House

Frederick Douglass, leading black abolitionist.

Lincoln...

(continued from page 3)

after compromise. For a whole historical period, Lincoln was hardly alone in seeking détente. In 1848, even the more left-wing Salmon Chase rejected the view espoused by radicals in his Liberty Party that the Constitution empowered the government to abolish slavery in the states, preferring a bloc with antislavery Whigs and Democrats that would agitate merely for keeping slavery out of the territories.

While he conciliated the border states for a time, Lincoln stood firm against secession, countering his cabinet members' willingness to compromise in the face of the Confederacy's belligerence. After his fateful election in 1860, which set the stage for the secession of the Southern states and the Civil War, Lincoln reined in his future secretary of state William H. Seward for advocating support to the Crittenden Compromise, an attempt to allow slavery to flourish anywhere south of 36°30'. Then Lincoln rejected Seward's proposal to abandon Fort Sumter in the Charleston, South Carolina, harbor. Had it not been for Lincoln's relentless efforts to goad his officers to fight and his stubborn support for Ulysses S. Grant in the face of substantial Northern opposition, the North might not have vanquished the slavocracy in that time and place. Lincoln's resoluteness, his iron determination to achieve victory and his refusal to stand down to the Confederacy are hallmarks of his revolutionary role and enduring testaments to his greatness.

Borrowing from today's terminology, one could argue that Lincoln began as a reformist, believing that the reactionary social system in the South could be pressured into change and that the institution of slavery would eventually wither on the vine. But he underwent a radical shift when bloody experience in the crucible of war—combined with the mass flight of the slaves to the Union lines—taught him that the nation could be preserved only by means of social revolution. In contrast to this remarkable personal transformation, the Great French Revolution required a series of tumultuous stages to reach its revolutionary climax, a protracted process that was marked by the domination of different and antagonistic groupings—from the Girondins to the Montagnards to the Committee of Public Safety. The Mensheviks were also reformists, but they didn't become revolutionaries but counterrevolutionaries.

Was Lincoln a Racist?

Although it is beyond dispute that Lincoln occasionally appealed to racist consciousness and expressed racist opinions, the record is not as cut-and-dried as the typical liberal moralist or his leftist cousin will assert. Before a proslavery crowd in Charleston, Illinois, during the fourth debate with Stephen A. Douglas on 18 September 1858, Lincoln declared:

> "I will say, then, that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races; that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say, in addition to this, that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality. And in as much as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I, as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race."

Yet two months earlier in Chicago, Lincoln had insisted, "Let us discard all this quibbling about this man and the other man, this race and that race and the other race being inferior, and therefore they must be placed in an inferior position; discarding our standard that we have left us. Let us discard all these things, and unite as one people throughout this land, until we shall once more stand up declaring that all men are created equal."

However, more important than these

Berkey/NY Times

Civil War historian James McPherson giving a tour of Shiloh National Military Park.

words were Lincoln's *actions* in defense of the slaves, the freedmen and the black troops in the Union Army. For example, in the autumn of 1864, pressure mounted for Lincoln to consummate a prisoner exchange that would exclude black soldiers. Some Republican leaders warned that Union men "will work and vote against the President, because they think sympathy with a few negroes, also captured, is the cause of a refusal" to exchange prisoners. Ignoring these threats, Lincoln's agent in the exchange negotiations asserted, "The wrongs, indignities, and privations suffered by our soldiers would move me to consent to anything to procure their exchange, except to barter away the honor and the faith of the Government of the United States, which has been so solemnly pledged to the colored soldiers in its ranks" (James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* [1988]).

That's not all. Confronting growing defeatist sentiment in the North, the grim prospect of defeat in the impending 1864 presidential elections and a cacophony of demands to abandon the Emancipation Proclamation from Democrats and even staunch Republicans, Lincoln stood firm. In response to fulminations such as "Tens of thousands of white men must yet bite the dust to allay the negro mania of the President," Lincoln responded, "If they [the black soldiers] stake their lives for us they must be prompted by the strongest motive—even the promise of freedom. And the promise being made, must be kept." Emphasizing the point, he maintained, "There have been men who have proposed to me to return to slavery the black warriors of Port Hudson & Olustee to their masters to conciliate the South. I should be damned in time & in eternity for so doing. The world shall know that I will keep my faith to friends & enemies, come what will."

In the last months of the war, the emancipation of the slaves began to raise broader political and economic questions. When reports filtered northward of General William Tecumseh Sherman's indifference toward the thousands of freedmen that had attached themselves to his army, Lincoln's war secretary Edwin Stanton traveled to Savannah, Georgia, in January 1865 to talk with Sherman and consult with black leaders. As a result of Stanton's visit, Sherman issued "Special Field Orders, No. 15," which granted the freed slaves rich plantation land belonging to former slaveholders.

Indignantly protesting that Lincoln valued the restoration of the Union over the emancipation of the slaves, the RCP cites his famous letter to Horace Greeley of 22 August 1862, which declared: "My paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that." The RCP neglects to add that a month later, on September 22, Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Commenting on this momentous event, Marx called Lincoln's manifesto abolishing slavery "the most important document in American history since the establishment of the Union, tantamount to the tearing up of the old American Constitution."

What was more important for Lincoln's cause, Union or emancipation? The very question betrays a subjective idealist approach that ignores the objective reality of the time. The two tasks had become inextricably intertwined in the reality of a war that pitted a modern industrial capitalist mode of production in the North against an archaic agrarian slave system in the South. Restoration of the Union required emancipation, and emancipation required a Union victory. For embodying and melding those two great tasks, Lincoln will forever occupy an honored place in history.

Much Ado About Colonization

An oft-repeated theme among Lincoln's detractors is that the 16th president—a racist to his bones, they assert—was dedicated above all else to deporting the freed black slaves to distant shores. The most caustic purveyor of this timeworn slander is Lerone Bennett Jr., executive editor emeritus of *Ebony* and the author of *Forced into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream* (2000). Bennett shrieks that "Abraham Lincoln's deepest desire was to deport all black people and create an all-white nation. It's—sounds like a wild idea now and it is a wild idea, but from about 1852 until his death, he worked feverishly to try to create deportation plans, colonization plans to send black people either to Africa or to...South America, or to the islands of the sea" (interview with Brian Lamb, 10 September 2000, www.booknotes.org/transcript/?programID=1581).

Lincoln did not invent the idea of colonization. Schemes to remove black

Library of Congress

14 April 1865: Assassination of Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth, supporter of the slavocracy who killed Lincoln three days after hearing his speech calling to extend vote to black troops and some freedmen.

people from the United States went back to the American Colonization Society, which was founded in 1816. Very much a product of his times, Lincoln was long a supporter of colonization because he believed that the ideal of racial harmony in America was impossible. Although reprehensible and misguided, Lincoln's colonization schemes were motivated not by racist antipathy toward black people but by his perceptions of enduring white racism in America. In the course of meeting with black leaders at the White House on 14 July 1862, Lincoln declared:

> "You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races. Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think your race suffer very greatly, many of them by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word, we suffer on each side. If this is admitted, it affords a reason at least why we should be separated....
>
> "Your race are suffering, in my judgment, the greatest wrong inflicted on any people. But even when you cease to be slaves, you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race. You are cut off from many of the advantages which the other race enjoy. The aspiration of men is to enjoy equality with the best, when free; but on this broad continent not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours. Go where you are treated the best, and the ban is still upon you."
>
> —cited in "Report on Colonization and Emigration, Made to the Secretary of the Interior, by the Agent of Emigration" (1862)

It is therefore not surprising that Lincoln advocated colonization most strenuously at the very moment that he was preparing his Provisional Emancipation Proclamation following the watershed Union victory at Antietam, which Marx said "decided the fate of the American Civil War." With his colonization proposals, Lincoln sought to sweeten what many whites considered the bitter pill of black emancipation.

However indefensible the idea of colonization was, Lincoln insisted that it must be *voluntary*. Even then, blacks overwhelmingly rejected colonization as both racist and impractical, holding anti-colonization meetings in Chicago and Springfield to protest it. Indeed, Frederick Douglass declared in September 1862: "Mr. Lincoln assumes the language and arguments of an itinerant Colonization lecturer, showing all his inconsistencies, his pride of race and blood, his contempt for Negroes and his canting hypocrisy." One of the administration's two concrete moves to implement colonization, the Île à Vache fiasco, led to the deaths of dozens of freed blacks. However, when Lincoln learned of the disaster, he did the honorable thing and ordered the Navy to return the survivors to the United States.

Besides free blacks and Radical Abolitionists, many other contemporaries of Lincoln were incensed at his colonization efforts. Publications like *Harper's Weekly* considered the proposal to resettle millions of people to distant shores insane. In Eric Foner's words, "For what idea was more utopian and impractical than this fantastic scheme?" ("Lincoln and Colonization," in *Our Lincoln: New Perspectives on Lincoln and His World*, ed., Eric Foner [2008]).

By the waning days of the war, Lincoln's utterances on colonization—if not his attitude—had evolved. In a diary entry dated 1 July 1864, Lincoln's secretary John Hay remarked, "I am glad that the President has sloughed off the idea of colonization." But much more to the point than attempts to decipher Lincoln's attitudes is the indisputable fact that Lincoln's policies on the ground were progressively rendering his colonization schemes a dead letter. Foner writes that in 1863 and 1864, Lincoln began to consider the role that blacks would play in a post-slavery America. He showed particular interest in efforts that were under way to establish schools for blacks in the South Carolina Sea Islands and in how former slaves were being put to work on plantations in the Mississippi Valley. In August 1863, he instructed General Nathaniel P. Banks to establish a system in Louisiana during wartime Reconstruction in which "the two races could gradually live themselves out of their old relation to each other, and both come out better prepared for the new."

Historian Richard N. Current wrote, "By the end of war, Lincoln had abandoned the idea of resettling free slaves outside the United States. He had come to accept the fact that Negroes, as a matter of justice as well as practicality, must be allowed to remain in the only homeland they knew, given education and opportunities for self-support, and started on the way to complete assimilation into American society" (cited at "Mr. Lincoln and Freedom," www.mrlincolnandfreedom.org). Indeed, on 11 April 1865, following Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Lincoln gave a speech in which he declared that literate blacks and black Union Army veterans should have the right to vote in a reconstructed Union—an early step toward the 14th Amendment and citizenship for the freed slaves.

A dishonest charlatan that considers Lincoln no better than Hitler, Lerone Bennett brings the very concept of scholarship

Karl Marx on Lincoln Re-Election

We print below Karl Marx's letter to Abraham Lincoln written between 22 and 29 November 1864 on behalf of the International Working Men's Association.

Sir

We congratulate the American People upon your Re-election by a large Majority.

If resistance to the Slave Power was the reserved Watchword of your first election, the triumphant Warcry of your Re-election is, Death to Slavery.

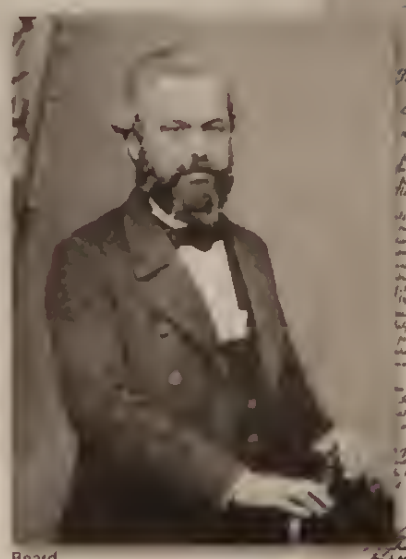
From the commencement of the Titanic American Strife, the Working men of Europe felt instinctively that the Star spangled Banner carried the Destiny of their class. The Contest for the territories which opened the dire epopee, Was it not to decide whether the virgin soil of immense tracts should be wedded to the Labour of the Emigrant, or prostituted by the Tramp of the Slave Driver?

When an Oligarchy of 300,000 Slaveholders dared to inscribe, for the first time in the annals of the World, Slavery on the Banner of Armed Revolt; when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great democratic Republic had first sprung up. Whence the first Declaration of The Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse given to the European Revolution of the 18th Century; When on those very spots counter revolution, with systematic thoroughness, gloried in rescinding "The ideas entertained at the time of the formation of the old Constitution" and maintained "Slavery to be a beneficent Institution, indeed the only solution of the great problem of the relation of Lahour to Capital," and cynically proclaimed property in Man "The corner stone of the New Edifice"; Then the Working Classes of Europe understood at once, Even before the fanatic partisanship of the Upper Classes for the confederate gentry had given its dismal warning, That the Slaveholder's Rebellion was to sound the toesin for a general holy Crusade of Property against Labour, and that for the Men of Labour, with their hopes for the future, even their past conquests were at stake in that tremendous Conflict on the other side of the Atlantic. Everywhere they bore therefore patiently the hardships imposed upon them by the Cotton crisis, opposed enthusiastically the Pro Slavery Intervention, importunities of their "betters," and from most parts of Europe contributed their quota of blood to the good cause.

While the Working Men, the true political power of the North, allowed Slavery to defile their own Republic, while before the Negro, mastered and sold without his concurrence, they boasted it the highest prerogative of the white skinned Laborer to sell himself and choose his own Master, they were unable to attain the true Freedom of Labour or to support their European Brethren in their struggle for Emancipation, but this barrier to progress has been swept off by the red sea of Civil War.

The Working Men of Europe feel sure that as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the Middle Class, so the American Anti-Slavery War will do for the Working Classes. They consider it an earnest of the epoch to come, that it fell to the lot of Abraham Lincoln, the single-minded Son of the Working Class, to lead his Country through the matchless struggle for the rescue of an enchained Race and the Reconstruction of a Social World.

—Karl Marx, "To Ahraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America" (November 1864)



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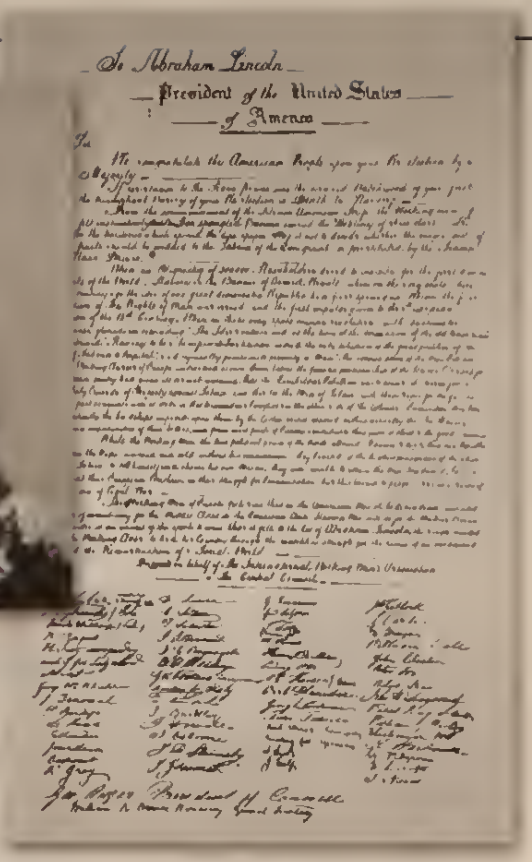


To Abraham Lincoln
President of the United States
of America

Karl Marx and congratulatory letter sent to Lincoln by First International.

into disrepute. In disgust at Bennett's diatribes, one critic, Edward Steers Jr., sarcastically titled his review, "Great Emancipator or Grand Wizard?" And McPherson wrote that while Lincoln "was not a radical abolitionist, he did consider slavery morally wrong, and seized the opportunity presented by the war to move against it. Bennett fails to appreciate the acuity and empathy that enabled Lincoln to transcend his prejudices and to preside over the greatest social revolution in American history, the liberation of four million slaves" ("Lincoln the Devil," *New York Times*, 27 August 2000).

Honor Lincoln—Finish the Civil War!

At times, Frederick Douglass was highly critical of Lincoln's moderation and his relegation of black people to the status of what he called "step-children." But Douglass also saw another side of the 16th president. In his autobiography, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1882), the great abolitionist wrote of his meeting with Lincoln at the White House in 1864:

> "The increasing opposition to the war, in the North, and the mad cry against it, because it was being made an abolition war, alarmed Mr. Lincoln, and made him apprehensive that a peace might be forced upon him which would leave still in slavery all who had not come within our lines. What he wanted was to make his proclamation as effective as possible in the event of such a peace.... What he said on this day showed a deeper moral conviction against slavery than I had ever seen before in anything spoken or written by him. I listened with the deepest interest and profoundest satisfaction, and, at his suggestion, agreed to undertake the organizing of a band of scouts, composed of colored men, whose business should be somewhat after the original plan of John Brown, to go into the rebel States, beyond the lines of our armies, and carry the news of emancipation, and urge the slaves to come within our boundaries."

Rather than weigh the "good" Lincoln against the "bad" in search of the golden mean, Marxists must seek to understand that he was a bourgeois politician in a time of war and revolution—"a big, inconsistent, brave man," in the words of W.E.B. Du Bois (cited in Henry Louis Gates Jr., "Was Lincoln a Racist?" *The Root*, available at www.theroot.com/views/was-lincoln-racist).

WV Photo

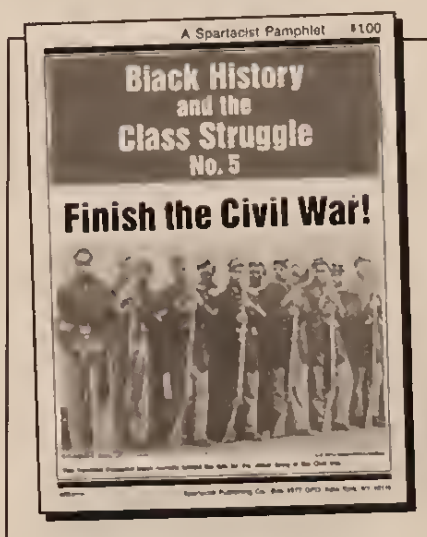
Spartacist supporter, dressed in Union Army uniform, tearing down Confederate flag of slavery and Klan terror at San Francisco Civic Center, 1984.

With the election of Barack Obama as America's first black president, bourgeois media pundits are acting as if he is the reincarnation of Abraham Lincoln. Billboards show a huge portrait of Lincoln with Obama's face superimposed on it. Obama takes the presidential oath on Lincoln's Bible. Liberal students go a step further, preferring Obama over Lincoln because Lincoln, they assert, was a racist who would have disapproved of a black president. In fact, U.S. imperialism's current Commander-in-Chief has as much in common with the bourgeois revolutionary Abraham Lincoln as British prime minister Gordon Brown has with the great English revolutionary Oliver Cromwell or French president Nicolas Sarkozy has with the French revolutionary Maximilien Robespierre.

In condemning Lincoln as a racist and besmirching his supreme role in the liquidation of slavery, fake leftists like the RCP surely must have a hard time with Marx's November 1864 letter to Lincoln on behalf of the First International congratulating the American people for his re-election as president (see accompanying box). By declaring that the European workers saw the star-spangled banner as carrying the destiny of their class, was Marx forsaking the red flag of communism? Not at all. For Marx and the workers of the Old World, Lincoln's re-election guaranteed the irreversibility of the Emancipation Proclamation; it meant that the Union Army—first and foremost its "black warriors"—did not fight in vain. And they understood that with the demise of the slave power, the unbridled growth of capitalism would lay the foundation for the growth of the American proletariat—capitalism's future gravedigger.

At bottom, the impulse to denounce Lincoln and to minimize his monumental role in history denies that political people—even great ones—are constrained by objective reality. If only poor Lincoln had not lacked the necessary will to eradicate all forms of racial oppression! As Marx explained, "Mankind thus inevitably sets itself only such tasks as it is able to solve, since closer examination will always show that the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the course of formation" (*A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* [1859]). The elimination of racial oppression in all its forms was not possible in 1861 or 1865 because the objective means to accomplish it were not yet present—the unfettered growth of industrial capitalism in America and the development of the working class.

Lincoln accomplished the task placed before him by history: the abolition of slavery. He could do so despite, and because of, the conceptions in his head. The task of Trotskyists—revolutionary Marxists—is different. Our aim is proletarian revolution. Our perspective is revolutionary integrationism. While opposing every manifestation of racist oppression, we underline that liberating black people from racial oppression and poverty—conditions inherent to the U.S. capitalist system—can be achieved only by establishing an egalitarian socialist society. Building such a society requires the overthrow of the capitalist system by the working class and its allies. This is possible only by forging a revolutionary, internationalist working-class party that champions the rights of all the oppressed and declares war on all manifestations of social, class and sexual oppression. That task will be fulfilled by a third American revolution—a workers revolution.■



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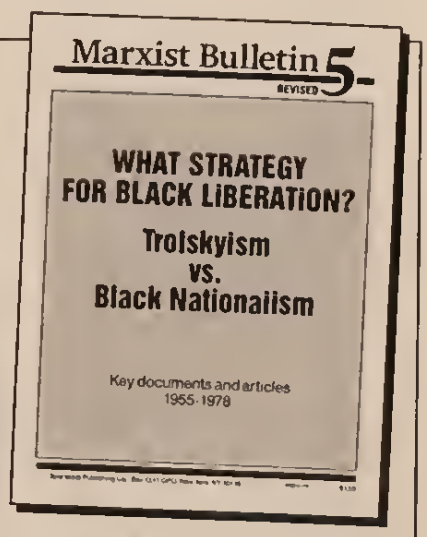

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We print below, in slightly edited form, a presentation by Don Cane to a Spartacist League educational in the Bay Area on March 14.

The Grant Administration (1869-1877) and the Rise of U.S. Imperialism

The German Social Democratic leader Karl Kautsky, in reference to the early English settlers in North America, wrote that they:

> "carried the peculiar Anglo-Saxon mode of thought along with them across the ocean. They did not find anything on the other side that could have shaken them in their views. No class free from the work for a living was formed that could have cultivated arts and sciences for their own sake. We only find farmers and city dwellers whose maxim was that of the home country: Time is Money.... This also became the principle of the gradually arising proletariat for the simple reason that they did not feel as a proletariat, but considered their position only as a stage of transition for the purpose of becoming farmers, capitalists or at least lawyers...."
>
> —"Socialist Agitation Amongst Farmers in America" (1902)

I will not be able to cover all subjects related to this class in a timely manner. I will address the Ulysses S. Grant administration (1869-1877) and imperialism in detail, Reconstruction in general and some details as well as the emergence of the organized labor movement and Populism.

PART ONE

In his classic book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), Lenin defined imperialism as:

> "The monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up."

It is generally accepted by Marxists that American capitalism entered the imperialist stage with the Spanish-American War (1898), when the U.S. took over the Spanish colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. But is it possible to fix a date for such a dynamic process? I do not believe it is possible to fix such a date. The following quote is from an American business journal:

> "Excess capacity became a problem in a number of industries well before the depression of the 1890s. Efforts begun in the 1870s and 1880s to limit or regulate production were spurred on by the depression of the 1890s. Experiments with trade associations, pools, and trusts often culminated in the late 1890s with the creation of large holding companies. These companies concentrated control over production and pricing decisions in fewer hands, and they often bought out and closed down the most inefficient firms in their industries."
>
> —Quoted in William H. Becker, "American Manufacturers and Foreign Markets, 1870-1900," *Business History Review* (1973)

Top: Library of Congress, above: Felice Beato

Above: 1871 slaughter of Koreans by U.S. military. Below: Investigating commission visits Santo Domingo in 1871 during Grant's attempt at annexation of Dominican Republic.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

The journal further asserts that by 1890, "America's industrial might had reached a point where supply exceeded domestic demands and its need for foreign markets was sharply increasing." Emily Rosenberg in *Financial Missionaries to the World* (1999) states that the American economist Charles Conant's "theory, identifying overproduction and declining profits as the motive forces behind late-nineteenth-century imperialism, reappeared in the analysis of [J. A.] Hobson and ultimately became enshrined in the writings of V.I. Lenin."

The thing that is most characteristic about U.S. imperialism is that it did not reach world dominance by a gradual ascent, but by leaps and bounds. American products were in demand in foreign markets. By 1900 American capitalism, firmly based on the gold standard, began the work of manipulating world finance away from London, transforming New York into a world financial center. J. G. Wright, in an article in the June 1936 issue of the Trotskyist *New International* covering much of this same material in detail, concluded, "In 1898 the United States was a world power conducting a colonial policy with the perfect consciousness of her major imperialist interests."

With the Northern capitalist victory over the Confederate South in the Civil War all the elements compelling U.S. capitalism toward the imperialist stage cohered. Overproduction and the formation of finance capital were evident early on.

I would like to say a few words about Grant himself. The popular historical image of him is of a dimwitted and bloody drunk. But I believe that this image is a product of the same forces that wish to rewrite the history of the 1861-1865 American Civil War as a "war between the states" or, more grievously, "a struggle for Southern Independence." Grant was an intelligent, politically astute and brilliant bourgeois military officer. It is for this reason much venom is directed at him. His administration was no more corrupt than the rest of the American political structure. I believe that Grant, himself, was too financially incompetent to be a good thief.

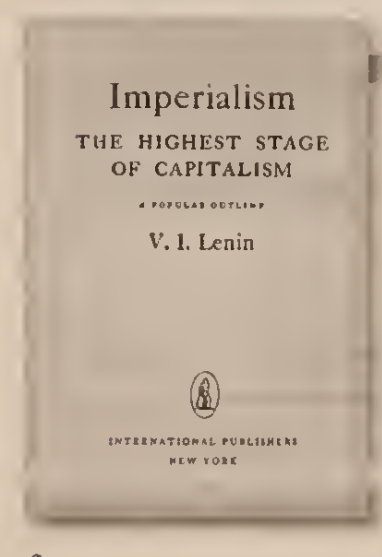
The Grant Administration and Emerging U.S. Imperialism

A closer examination of the Grant administration presents much evidence of the beginning consolidation of an American capitalist-imperialist class. However, a general understanding has prevailed (including among ourselves), to quote the first sentence of Lenin's *Imperialism*, that "especially since the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), the economic and also the political literature of the two hemispheres has more and more often adopted the term 'imperialism' in order to describe the present era."

It was the Grant administration that took the first steps to convert the Caribbean into an American lake—recognizing the importance of securing an island with a large harbor and building the Panama Canal connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean. It was the Grant administration that anticipated the Anglo-American alliance—deferring to the British as the world's superpower as it simultaneously sought to be both competitor and ally of British imperialism. It was the Grant administration that recognized the need for a strong navy to pursue Pacific Rim trade under the banner of "free trade."

It was a politically moderate Grant administration that oversaw Radical Reconstruction—a turbulent decade of interracial bourgeois democracy in the South, the most egalitarian experiment in U.S. history, ultimately betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie. It is today an accepted view that Grant was sympathetic to black demands. But this view is simply shallow. Grant both understood and accepted the legitimacy of what he referred to as the "governing classes." For Grant, the bourgeois military officer, black people were allies in the struggle against a hated enemy, the Confederacy. Thus, he supported the recruitment of black troops into the Union Army as an effective military measure in the struggle to destroy the Confederate Army. Grant, the bourgeois politician, feared that the Johnson administration, which took over after Lincoln's assassination in 1865, would surrender to the defeated Confederate enemy what had been gained by the Union Army on the battlefield. Thus, he supported black voting rights in the political struggle against a still hostile enemy.

The Grant administration came into power on the slogan, "Let there be peace." But it also understood that the war had not ended with the surrender of Confederate general Robert E. Lee's army. The Civil War, a military contest between



B.D. Vigilev

Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin wrote 1916 pamphlet providing classic Marxist analysis of Imperialism.

two property classes—the capitalists and the slave masters—ended with the victory of the Northern-based capitalist class. Reconstruction was a struggle to consolidate this victory and reshape the whole of American society in the image of the bourgeoisie.

In an historical irony, Abraham Lincoln created the U.S. Secret Service the same day he was assassinated. When Grant entered the White House as president it was common for several Secret Service agents to be present on every floor of the White House. Nonetheless, it was also common that the general public was allowed use of the White House grounds and free entry into the White House to await the arrival of the president or other officials. It was the Grant administration that padlocked the White House gates, denying use of its grounds to the public. Under the Grant administration, access to the president was by appointment only. The Grant administration was the first to recruit military officers for the White House staff. Responding to the pressure of Republican Party politicians, Grant replied, "I am not the representative of a political party." In a letter accepting the Republican nomination, he clearly stated the president was "a purely administrative officer," elected "to execute the will of the people" (quoted in Geoffrey Perret, *Ulysses S. Grant, Soldier and President* [1997]). In all of this we see shades of the imperial presidency to come.

Grant strongly opposed the Tenure of Office Act (1867), which denied the president the power to remove from office anyone appointed by the president and approved by the United States Senate unless the Senate also approved the removal. He consistently fought for the power to hire and fire his appointed cabinet. At the same time, he supported the British model of civil service in opposition to party patronage. It was political tradition that the party that won the election carried out the wholesale firing of political opponents then in government employment, replacing them with its own supporters. This spoils system was a source of incompetence in government. In the British government it was those officials whose work concerned military affairs who first came to appreciate the advantages of a hiring and promotion system based on competitive examination—civil service. It should be no surprise that Grant, a professional soldier who witnessed firsthand the incompetence of politically appointed Union Army officers, would also appreciate the advantages of such a civil service system.

U.S. Expansion into Asia

In 1871 the Grant administration sent a naval force into Korean waters. Some of the senior officers of this force were experienced Civil War veterans. This naval force sent out survey teams to map the Korean coast. When this act was not sufficient to provoke a Korean response, survey teams armed with artillery and rifles were sent upriver in the direction of the Korean capital, Seoul. Needless to say, they were fired upon, and the Americans retaliated by killing over 250 Korean soldiers at a loss of only three of their own. Journalists wrote about the episode as a pivotal event in 19th-century U.S.-East Asian relations—as one wrote, "by far the most important political action undertaken by the United States in Asia until the occupation of the Philippines in 1898" (quoted in Gordon H. Chang, "Whose 'Barbarism'? Whose 'Treachery'? Race and Civilization in the Unknown United States-Korea War of 1871," *Journal of American History* [March 2002]).

The war was one of the largest and bloodiest uses of military force overseas by the United States in the 50 years between the Mexican-American War of 1846-48 and the Spanish-American War of 1898. It was also the first time that American ground forces actually seized, held and raised the American flag over territory in Asia. The American objective was to "open" Korea for trade—just as Commodore Matthew C. Perry had "opened" Japan in the 1850s. Korea was a protectorate of China, paying tribute to the Chinese court in exchange for being left alone. American diplomats pressured Chinese officials to obtain a Korean invitation for this naval force. The Chinese officials reluctantly complied, but the Korean invitation never came. To the imperialists, a backward nation's refusal to open itself up for trade was an affront to their "civilizing" mission of world conquest. The Koreans, of course, forced to capitulate, protested that it was the right of any nation to defend its borders. At an earlier time they had defeated a French military excursion attempting to accomplish similar objectives as the Americans. Indeed, the American officers consulted the French, following the same upriver route of the French forces.

In the summer of 1879, Grant and his wife were in the final stage of a two-year pleasure trip around the world following the end of Grant's second term. In Grant's words he was a "private citizen" touring the world on U.S. warships. With his arrival in China, a very revealing incident took place. The Japanese government had seized a group of islands belonging to the Ryukyu island chain (including Okinawa) claimed by China. The Chinese appealed to Grant to intercede on their behalf. Grant responded, "I have no knowledge on the subject, and no idea what opinion I may entertain when I have studied it." But it is clear in Grant's negotiations with the Japanese that he did, in fact, have some knowledge on the subject. To the Chinese he had nothing much to say, except to deplore the Europeans' treatment of Asian nations. To the Japanese he had a lot more to say, first of all, urging them to come to a negotiated settlement with the Chinese—a settlement that they easily and readily came to.

Grant reminded the Japanese that the United States was their nearest neighbor in the West. He went on to state, "No nation needs from the outside powers justice and kindness more than Japan, because the work that has made such marvelous progress in the past few years is a work in which we are deeply concerned" (quoted in Horatio Wirtz, "General Ulysses Grant: Diplomat Extraordinaire," in Wilson and Simon, eds., *Ulysses S. Grant: Essays and Documents*). This, of course, was in reference to Japanese capitalist modernization under the Emperor Meiji at the time (see "The Meiji Restoration: A Bourgeois Non-Democratic Revolution," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 58, Spring 2004).

Again, Grant deplored the European treatment of Asian nations. But Grant also raised the problem of extraterritorial rights forced on Japan by European powers, supported by the United States, which was now willing to revise these. These treaties limited to 5 percent the tariff Japan could place on imports. Grant urged the Japanese to defy the Europeans and claim a greater percentage of profit from commerce that they were rightly entitled to. He explained that such a move would make it possible to relieve the Japanese people of a great burden—the land tax. At the time only 3.8 percent of Japanese revenue came from customs duties while 64.8 percent came from the land tax. The land tax was clearly an obstacle to development. Furthermore, Grant advised the Japanese to avoid European bank loans. Grant explained to the Japanese that the British, after the experience of the Afghan and Zulu campaigns, were in no position to take counteraction.

In 1872 the United States Navy acquired a mid-Pacific coaling station at Samoa, Pago Pago Harbor. Such coaling stations were of immense importance for the extension of naval power. The Germans were alarmed and laid claim to an interest in the Samoan islands group. This solicited a response from the British. All three nations then sent battleships to the Samoan waters. But the American and British naval forces were clearly acting in concert to block the Germans. After some period of jockeying, these islands passed permanently under American control. At a later period, 1893, the American sugar plantation owners, supported by American military forces, staged a Texas-style revolt overthrowing the native monarchist government of Hawaii. The strategic Pacific islands were soon annexed by the United States.

U.S. Expansion in the Western Hemisphere

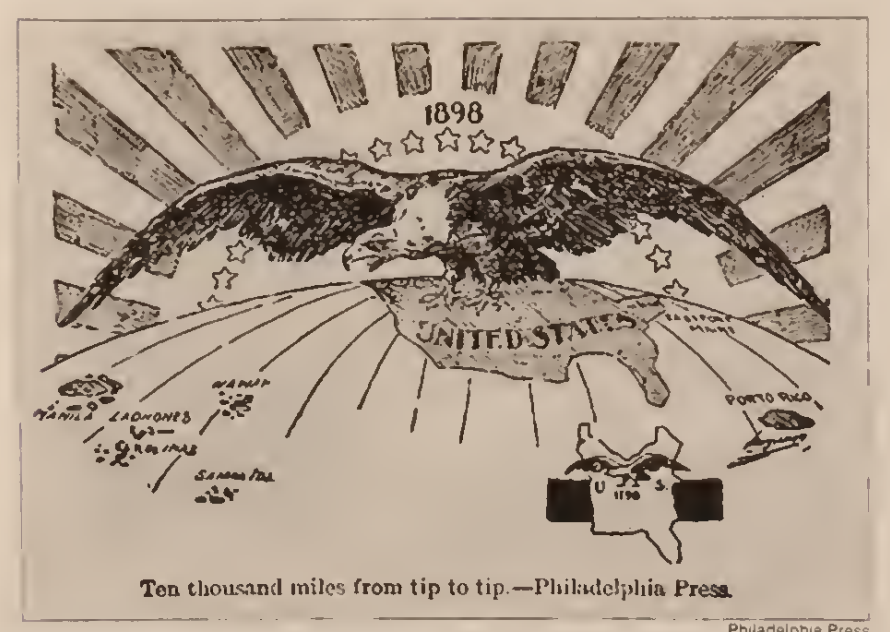
In 1869, seeking Caribbean harbors, Grant had concluded an annexation agreement with the dictator of Santo Domingo (the modern-day Dominican Republic). Grant's administration also sought the purchase of the Caribbean islands of St. John and St. Thomas from Denmark. The purchase agreement of these islands was concluded at a later period. The annexation agreement of Santo Domingo failed in the Senate, which was angry that the Grant administration had negotiated it without consultation with the Senate. Grant envisioned the future of Santo Domingo as an annexed American state with a black majority. He also viewed it as a solution to the black question. He wrote of blacks that they were "brought to our shores by compulsion, and now should be considered as having as good a right to remain here as any other class of our citizens. It was looking to a settlement of this question that led me to urge the annexation of Santo Domingo."

Grant explained that the island was capable of supporting 15 million people and he "took it that the colored people would go there in great numbers, so as to have independent states governed by their own race. They would still be states of the union, and under the attention of the general government; but the citizens would be almost wholly colored" (U.S. Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters*). But it was the race question that led ultimately to the Senate rejection of the annexation agreement. They did not desire more "colored" U.S. citizens. They felt the same way about Hawaii, but the strategic importance of these islands overcame race prejudice.

continued on page 10

Harper's Weekly

Above: U.S. adjutant-general in Louisiana addresses black soldiers and freed slaves in 1863. Right: Thomas Nast cartoon depicts victory of racist reaction as Northern capitalists betray post-Civil War Reconstruction.



Philadelphia Press

1898 political cartoon following U.S. victory in Spanish-American War celebrated U.S. status as imperial power.

UAW...

(continued from page 1)

crisis. The auto industry's devastation is a stark example of the anarchy and decay of capitalist production for profit to which there is no simple trade-union solution. But one thing is clear. If the unions are to fight not only in their own interests, but in the interests of the mass of unorganized workers and the unemployed, there must be a new leadership of labor, one armed with a program of class struggle. This is an integral part of the fight to forge a revolutionary workers party that champions the cause of black people, immigrants and all the impoverished masses brutally ground down under the heel of America's capitalist rulers. As we wrote in "Auto Bailout Means Union Busting" (*WV* No. 931, 27 February):

> "The fight for jobs is equivalent to the fight against the devastation of America's working people. What is necessary is a massive program of public works at union wages to rebuild the dams, bridges and roads that are in an advanced stage of decay; to tear down and replace the crumbling public schools in the nation's inner cities; to create an America that looks like a place that its inhabitants could survive in. It is necessary to call an end to the layoffs by shortening the workweek at no loss in pay, as part of the struggle for jobs for all.
>
> "All must have full access to medical care at no cost and unemployment benefits must be extended until there are jobs, with all pensions completely guaranteed by the government. Such demands, the elements of which were laid out in the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, will not be granted by the rapacious capitalist rulers. The capitalist state exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed or wielded to serve the interests of working people. The catastrophe of joblessness, threatening the disintegration of the working class, can be effectively fought only by a workers movement led by those committed to the struggle for socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers government where those who labor rule."

Capitalism's Labor Lieutenants

In return for allowing the automakers to cut in half the billions owed the health benefit program, the UAW will get 55 percent of the equity in the "New Chrysler"—and one seat on the board—and up to 20 percent in "New GM" once the companies emerge from bankruptcy. But what's 55 percent of nothing? Until the private equity firm Cerberus bought Chrysler in 2007, the UAW head had sat on the board for almost 30 years. Chrysler first offered the UAW tops a seat when it was threatening bankruptcy in 1979, all the better for UAW chief Doug Fraser to help shove concessions and plant closings down the workers' throats. Now, the UAW rep on the Chrysler board is obligated to vote "in accordance with the direction of the independent directors."

AP

August 1973: Doug Fraser, then UAW vice president, after organizing 1,000-strong goon squad of union functionaries to quash factory occupation at Mack Ave. Stamping Plant in Detroit.

Round after round of concessions from the labor traitors have greatly undermined union organizing, as workers rightly expect something to show for being members of a union. In 1982, GM closed its assembly plant in Fremont, California—a relatively new facility built in 1968—dispersing the heavily black workforce. The company reopened the plant as a joint venture with Toyota, with no union. After cutting a "sweetheart" deal with the automakers in 1985, the UAW got back into the plant. Now one Fremont UAW worker told *WV* that workers increasingly don't see the benefit of the union. The very survival of the unions demands a struggle against the class collaborationism of the labor bureaucracy.

For Gettelfinger & Co., the overriding concern is not the livelihood of the UAW membership but the "competitiveness" of U.S. automakers. In testimony before Congress last year, the UAW chief went so far as to boast that "the gap in labor costs" between the Big Three and the non-union "foreign transplant operations ***will be largely or completely eliminated by the end of the*** [2007] ***contracts***." This is what the union misleaders' poisonous "America First" protectionism means: railing against "outsourcing" of jobs abroad while not lifting a finger to organize the mass of unorganized auto workers in "foreign transplant operations" in the American South and elsewhere.

Detroit News

November 1945: Auto workers launch strike at Chevrolet Gear & Axle in Detroit.

In an e-mail to UAW members at GM, the UAW bureaucracy called on Obama to "maintain the maximum number of jobs in the U.S. instead of outsourcing more production to foreign countries." Such protectionism undermines struggle by poisoning workers' class consciousness and solidarity, scapegoating foreign workers for the loss of jobs in the U.S. while reinforcing support to the American capitalist order.

The UAW bureaucracy has long been a leading force tying the working class to the capitalist rulers through support to the capitalist Democratic Party. A *New York Times* article (30 April) quoted Walter Reuther, who became UAW head in 1946, saying, "We have to fight both in the economic and political fields, because what you win on the picket lines, they take away in Washington if you don't fight on that front." For the social-democratic Reuther and his UAW successors, the Washington "front" has always meant subordinating the union to the Democrats. In service to this class-collaborationist alliance, the union tops have all but given up the class-struggle methods that built the unions in the first place.

The only way the labor movement can be revitalized is by returning to the road of class struggle. Immediately posed is the fight to organize the mass of unorganized workers, particularly in the "right to work" South. This will require actively combating black oppression, long used by the capitalists to divide and weaken labor as a whole. Against the government's anti-immigrant raids, which have derailed one organizing campaign after another, the union movement must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. Key to all such battles is the fight for the political independence of the workers from the capitalists and their government and political parties. *Break with the Democrats! For a revolutionary workers party!*

Reformist Nationalization Schemes

Having joined the labor bureaucrats in hailing Obama's election, the reformist "socialists" now "hope" that he'll bail out working people. *Socialist Worker* (6 April), newspaper of the International Socialist Organization (ISO), baldly stated: "Instead of using its billions to help auto executives push through attacks on workers or to create small surges in demand, the Obama administration could use its leverage as the auto industry's creditor of last resort to implement a comprehensive plan that includes taking over the auto industry." Obama *is* "taking over the auto industry" precisely to "push through attacks on workers." The Obama administration is littered with Wall Street financiers—from Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner to National Economic Council head Larry Summers—whose program is trillions for the capitalists and sacrifice by the workers.

Appealing to this bankers' cabal to nationalize the auto industry, the ISO wrote in *International Socialist Review* (May-June 2009): "Nationalization of industries under threat of bankruptcy has historically been a demand of the socialist movement as a means to save jobs and ensure the provision of needed services." The ISO would be more honest if it said that this has historically been a demand of social democrats who seek to tinker with and administer the capitalist state. Such nationalizations amount to nothing more than giving failing

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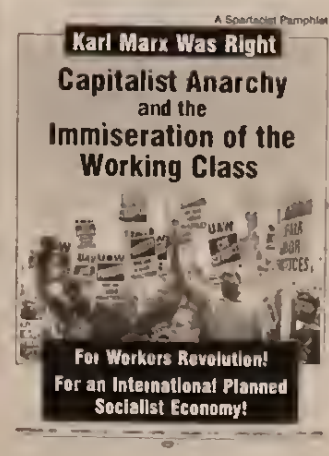

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Tiananmen 1989: Incipient Proletarian Political Revolution

June 4 marks the 20th anniversary of the Chinese government's bloody suppression of mass protests centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square. The imperialists and their media mouthpieces have seized on the anniversary to falsely portray those protests as a movement favoring capitalist counterrevolution under the banner of Western-style "democracy." In the two excerpts printed below, taken from articles published in Workers Vanguard *before and after the Tiananmen massacre, we underscored that the mass upheaval—which began with students but increasingly drew in workers chafing under the impact of pro-capitalist "market reforms"—heralded the beginning of a proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist rulers of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state.*

* * *

Peter Turnley

May 1989: Contingent from Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation arriving in Tiananmen Square.

The imperialists would like to see in the Beijing spring the flowering of a pro-Western mass movement. Some of the students' appeals are clearly aimed at the American media, such as the banner proclaiming (in English) "Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death." But as an April 27 march of 150,000 students attracted the support of an even larger number of workers, the marchers responded by chanting "Long live the proletariat!" And over and over they sing the *Internationale*, the historic anthem of the socialist working class. Again on the weekend of May 20-21, as the regime headed by Deng Xiaoping and Prime Minister Li Peng ordered troops to remove student hunger strikers, workers streamed into the square to stand with them. But while the workers have been massively present in the protests, they have not yet mobilized behind their own *class* program—to oust the bureaucratic misleaders of the Chinese deformed workers state and establish the rule of proletarian soviets....

Most dramatic is the immobilization of the army. Li Peng's order for a military crackdown was essentially ignored. Not only were the units which ventured into the capital surrounded by the populace, subway workers and management refused to transport them underground. The 38th Army, which is based in Beijing and includes many draftees from the capital, reportedly refused to move on the crowds. (The commander's daughter is supposed to be among the hunger strikers.) Now a letter has surfaced from seven former high-ranking military leaders, and signed by more than 100 officers, opposing bringing troops into the capital: "The army absolutely must not shoot the people" (*New York Times*, 23 May). The Paris *Libération* (18 May) quotes a former officer saying, "the situation in China currently rather resembles Hungary in 1956, except there is no possible Soviet intervention to save the regime."

In the face of this explosion of mass discontent, Deng called for "tough tactics," to "spill blood" if necessary to stop the protests; Gorbachev warned against "hotheads." While Bush and other Western leaders worry in public about "stability" in Beijing, privately they talk of counterrevolution. But it's far from clear that the inchoate mass upsurge is going in any such direction. What the Chinese working people urgently need is ***genuine communism***, a genuinely Marxist and Leninist communist party to replace the bureaucratic regime with ***workers and soldiers soviets*** at the head of the poor peasantry. Instead of the nationalism of the Chinese Stalinists from Mao to Deng, which has led China into a counterrevolutionary military and diplomatic alliance with the U.S. against the Soviet Union and Vietnam, what's needed is ***communist unity against imperialism***.

—"Upheaval in China"
(*WV* No. 478, 26 May 1989)

* * *

The June 4 massacre at Beijing's Tiananmen Square brought China to the brink of civil war. The mass outpouring of defiance heralded the Chinese proletarian political revolution against the corrupt and despised Stalinist bureaucracy. For the moment the Deng regime has weathered the storm and is now cracking down, striking first and hardest at the working class. But the decrepit bureaucratic caste, which has opened the doors of China to massive capitalist encroachment and shamelessly allied itself with U.S. imperialism, can be shattered. ***The central lesson of the Beijing spring and the urgent task which stands before the Chinese workers is the forging of an authentic communist party, an internationalist vanguard....***

The Western media usually describes the oppositional forces in China as "the student movement for democracy." But it was the beginnings of a working-class revolt against Deng's program of "building socialism with capitalist methods" which gave the protests their mass and potentially revolutionary nature. Organized workers' contingents started to participate in the marches, and it was the threat of a general strike which led Li Peng to order martial law in mid-May. Moreover, the outpouring of hundreds of thousands of working people into the streets stymied the regime's attempted crackdown then. When the troops attacked unarmed people in Beijing on June 4, thousands of workers battled them with whatever came to hand....

The present repression may restore a certain surface stability to China for awhile. The working class has been forced back but has by no means been crushed. The unemployment, inflation and gross inequality spawned by Deng's "reforms" will continue to fuel popular discontent....

The only road forward remains the proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy, combined with socialist revolution against capitalist rule—not least in Hong Kong, Taiwan and strategic Japan. For Lenin's Communism! For a Chinese Trotskyist Party, section of a reforged Fourth International!

—"Defend Chinese Workers!"
(*WV* No. 480, 23 June 1989)■

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enterprises a new lease on life. The nationalization of the losers of capitalist competition has nothing in common with the socialist expropriation of the means of production by a workers government. Taking over and subsidizing bankrupt firms to "save jobs" was for many years a standard practice of British Labour Party governments by which they sought to promote the interests of British imperialism.

As our comrades in the Spartacist League/Britain observed in "New Labour Fleeces Working People" (*Workers Hammer* No. 205, Winter 2008-09): "In the context of British imperialism's loss of hegemonic power, the nationalisations of coal, steel and other industries by the [post-World War II] Clement Attlee Labour government were in reality giant capitalist bailouts designed to help British capitalism to compete in the world market." In competition with more efficient private firms, nationalized enterprises require massive subsidies financed by immiserating the working class through, for example, high taxation.

Polemicizing against reformist "socialists" who put forward nationalization schemes to rescue failing capitalist enterprises, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky declared:

> "We can say to the miner, you wish nationalization. Yes, it is our slogan. It is only a question of conditions. If the national property is too burdened with debts against the former owners, your conditions can become worse than now. To base the whole proceedings upon a free agreement between the owners and the state signifies ruin of the workers. Now you must organize your own government in the state and expropriate them."
>
> —"Conversation on the Slogan 'Workers and Farmers Government'," *Writings of Leon Trotsky, 1938-39*

The program of the labor bureaucracy and its reformist tails—defined by what is "practical" under capitalism—has led to disaster for the working class. We Marxists put forward the revolutionary strategy offered by the Transitional Program, where Trotsky declared: "The question is one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralization, and ruin.... If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish." The burning necessity is for a proletarian revolution to rip the productive wealth of society out of the hands of the greedy capitalist rulers and build a collectivized, planned economy where production is based on social need, not profit.■

Reuters

Protectionist rally organized by "Keep It Made in America," which includes United Steelworkers bureaucrats, in Sterling Heights, Michigan, May 11.

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The Rise of U.S. Imperialism...

(continued from page 7)

Grant played an active role in countering European influences in the Western Hemisphere. It was General Grant, in his military capacity, who urged the use of the American army to help expel the French from Mexico. In 1865, General Philip Sheridan was dispatched to the Mexican border with a large armed force prepared to do just this. The French withdrew from Mexico.

In 1867 the United States purchased Alaska from Russia. The purpose of this purchase was to contain the British. Grant, like many other representatives of the American ruling class, viewed Britain as a natural ally, but with wary bitterness. During the Civil War, the British government had permitted Confederate cruisers, built in British ports, to escape and prey upon the commerce of the U.S. The most famous of these Confederate cruisers was the *Alabama*. In 1871 the British and American governments entered into arbitration, known as the Alabama claims. Grant was the spokesman for a section of the American ruling class that demanded not only that the British pay a heavy fine but also that they concede Canada to the United States. It was rumored that the British were willing to give up Canada, though the Canadians objected. But other members of the American ruling class pointed out that London was still the center of world banking and the heavily indebted Americans coming out of the Civil War could not afford to confront them. The British paid a fine of $15.5 million and the matter was closed.

Marshall, Harrison County, Texas: A Microcosm of the Defeated South

We have always noted that imperialism abroad has a domestic reflection at home. Predatory imperialism's devouring of smaller nations, in competition with other imperialist powers, requires the suppression of class struggle at home. The American Civil War unleashed a great expansion of wealth and democracy. However, this expansion of political democracy was short-lived, as the American ruling class quickly entered upon the imperialist stage.

Michael Goldfield in *The Color of Politics* (1997) uses the term "dual power" loosely to describe the short-lived period of expansion of democracy based on the class struggle as it presented itself at this time. But to pose the question as one of a dual-power struggle between the Northern capitalist class and the defeated slave-master class is wrong. The American Civil War ended with the destruction of the slave-master class as a class and with the class emancipation of the slaves. In other words, slavery was abolished. What ensued in the aftermath was a struggle of contending class forces to reshape

U.S. Army

Integrated faculty of a Freedmen's Bureau school near Norfolk, Virginia.

American society, in particular the South. C. Vann Woodward's *Tom Watson: Agrarian Rebel* (1963) described the time: "A few old heads recognized 'Reconstruction' for what it was—a Yankee euphemism for capitalist expansion."

The essence of the struggles between the contending class forces after the Civil War was over control of the wealth created by labor—old wealth created by slave labor, new wealth created by the "free labor" of the freedmen. The following is a description of this struggle as it unfolded between 1865 and 1868 in Marshall, Harrison County, Texas (the home of Wiley College of *The Great Debaters* fame). [See "Communist Organizing in the Jim Crow South: What's Not in *The Great Debaters*," *WV* No. 925, 21 November 2008.]

General Sheridan, commander of the Union occupation troops in Texas, declared that if he owned both Texas and hell he would "rent out Texas and live in hell." It was reported that 2,700 blacks were killed in Texas between 1866 and 1867. The Freedmen's Bureau reported that between 1 January and 1 July 1867, 2,316 murders or assaults with attempt to kill occurred in Texas. The vast majority of victims of these assaults was black. There existed a state of lawlessness as senior Confederate officials fled to Mexico—from state to county to local towns, governmental authority ceased to function. Demobilized Confederate soldiers plundered Confederate and state properties, roaming the countryside robbing whites as well as blacks of anything of value.

The only semblance of law and order to prevail was with the Union Army deployed at county seats such as Marshall. In 1860 Harrison County was the wealthiest county in Texas and had the highest percentage of slave ownership. Of the total population of the county of 15,000 persons, 59 percent were slaves. Over 60 percent of white households owned at least one slave. The average slaveholding family possessed eleven slaves. Sixty-eight slaveowners owned 20 or more slaves; one slaveowner owned 104 slaves.

The emancipation of Harrison County's 10,000 slaves meant an immediate loss of approximately $7 million to the slaveowners. The misfortunes of war—high taxes, high cost of living, loss of fugitive slaves and the inability to market cotton at a profit—forced many planters into bankruptcy. During the war, Harrison County residents had no access to Northern financial institutions and Texas, like much of the South, had few banks. The local economy, reliant on the Confederate dollar, was reduced to bartering since neither cash nor credit was available. Large land holdings enabled a significant number of pre-Civil War planters to retain their status after emancipation. They did, however, suffer a real loss of wealth.

Northern capitalist interests and Southern planter interests both wanted a stable black labor supply. The system of contract labor was introduced by the Union Army and overseen by the Army's Freedmen's Bureau. The purpose of the contract was to keep black labor in place. The freedmen's desire to be paid in wages could not be met. Ready cash in the form of Union currency was still severely restricted. The Freedmen's Bureau intervened to negotiate sharecropping in lieu of wages. What is revealed here is the beginning of the South's notoriously oppressive sharecropping system of farming.

But one key element of the sharecropping system had not yet found its place. The planters sought to continue the work practices and organization that were typical of the slave system—to work gang labor under an overseer. The planters sought to continue working conditions similar to slavery—the planter possessed absolute authority and the worker no rights at all.

The freedmen resisted any work practice and organization similar to slavery. They resisted gang labor in preference to a division of the land to be worked individually. This breakup of the large plantations into smaller units was, of course, inefficient. But on this score the freedmen prevailed over the wishes of the planters with the planters retaining ownership of the land. The freedmen resisted any work contract that required the women and children of the family to work the fields. However, success on this point was entirely uneven. To the planters' displeasure, the freedmen resisted work outside of the crop—the planters defined the work to encompass the whole of the farm operation.

The freedmen faced powerful class enemies. Cotton, the leading export crop in the U.S. during the 19th century, secured foreign exchange for the U.S. Treasury. With $1.5 billion in war debts, the U.S. government was under pressure by European creditors to resume the exportation of cotton.

Marshall, Texas, attracted large numbers of freedmen who sought the security and assistance offered by the Union Army and the Freedmen's Bureau stationed there. Blacks who were either too young or too old for productive labor were simply dumped. Harrison County authorities refused to allocate funds to care for orphaned black children. County authorities devised a system of apprenticeship of black youth that committed them to labor for a master until the age of 21. This measure, of course, lessened the labor costs of white landowners. Oliver Otis Howard, the first Freedman's Bureau chief, declared: "State laws with regard to apprenticeship will be recognized... provided they make no distinction of color" (quoted in Kenneth Hamilton, "White Wealth and Black Repression in Harrison County, Texas: 1865-1868," *Journal of Negro History* [1999]). This color-blind approach of Howard's masked forced labor of black youth under the title "apprenticeship."

The initial Reconstruction government of Texas was composed of white pro-Union partisans exiled under the Confederate regime and now returned with the Union Army. Black Republicans entered the stage a little later, changing the character of the state government. Like the Northern capitalists, this state Reconstruction government recognized the benefits of a tax-supported education system; however, it established schools solely for white students. Blacks relied on the Freedmen's Bureau school that, with a black staff, taught blacks who supported the school with a monthly fee of $1.50 per student. Whenever blacks attempted to establish schools outside of the county seat of Marshall and the protection of the Freedmen's Bureau, their schools were broken up and the teachers forced to flee for their lives. This was Marshall, Harrison County, Texas, a microcosm of the defeated South in the period immediately following surrender—one can see why Sheridan preferred to live in hell than to live in Texas.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Tiller...

(continued from page 12)

Alabama, firebombing, 1998. Also in 1998, Dr. Barnett Slepian, the only staff physician at the only clinic providing abortions in Buffalo, New York, was shot in the back and killed by a sniper outside his home.

It's no accident that the last rash of vicious killings was in the 1990s, when anti-abortion terrorists felt they had lost the White House, and subsided when George W. Bush was in. Democrat Bill Clinton won the 1992 presidency with the support of women who favored his "pro-choice" stance. Determined to push their agenda, the "God squad" took to the streets. However, as Marxists we understand that the source of anti-woman bigotry in this violent country is not the particular capitalist party in power—Democrat or Republican—but the capitalist order that breeds oppression and bigotry as a necessary corollary to its system of exploitation, which both parties uphold. Despite the Democrats' pretense to care for "women's issues," during Clinton's presidency welfare for mothers was axed, safe access to abortion was massively reduced (the number of abortion providers plummeted 14 percent between 1992 and 1996) and state after state passed laws restricting abortion rights. According to the Guttmacher Institute, as of 2005 some 87 percent of U.S. counties, containing 35 percent of women aged 15-44, had no access to abortion providers.

Upon taking office, Barack Obama repealed George Bush's restrictions on federal money for international family planning groups and embryonic stem cell research. But like Bill Clinton, who said "we should all work to reduce the number of abortions," Obama seeks "dialogue" with the anti-abortion bigots. At his May 17 Notre Dame commencement speech, where "pro-life" demonstrators protested, Obama appealed to "both sides," supporting a "sensible conscience clause" that would allow health care providers to withhold abortion or other services that conflicted with their religious beliefs. Picking up where Clinton left off, Obama said: "Let us work together to reduce the number of women seeking abortions."

Along with his emphasis on "faith" and "family values," Obama's accommodation to the anti-abortion reactionaries reflects a fundamental political reality: the institution of the family, the main source of the oppression of women, is a necessary social prop for the capitalist system of exploitation for profit, as it has been for all previous class-divided societies. While Obama claimed he was "outraged" by Tiller's murder, as the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, he is the class enemy of working and oppressed women around the world. Both capitalist parties are enemies of women's liberation.

The wealthy will always get their medical care and their abortions, while the myriad anti-abortion laws target young, working-class and poor women, who can't afford quality health care, childcare, housing. We demand ***free abortion on demand*** and ***free quality health care for all***. The liberation of women requires a socialist revolution that will uproot the private property system and create a worldwide socialized planned economy. Only then will society be able to replace the institution of the family with socialized childcare and housework, bringing women into full participation in all areas of social and political life.

It is as communist fighters for women's liberation that we honor Dr. George Tiller, murdered for his courageous stand for abortion rights. ■

NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August.**

Our next issue will be dated July 3.

Lanka...

(continued from page 12)

and other sections of the International Communist League have joined in the Tamil protests, distributing literature in solidarity with the besieged Tamils and putting forward our proletarian-revolutionary perspective for national and social liberation. As we wrote in *Spartacist Canada* No. 160 (Spring 2009) [see *WV* No. 930, 13 February]:

> "We have long upheld the right of self-determination for the Tamil people—i.e., their right to form an independent state in the largely Tamil North and East. We stand for the military defense of the LTTE against the army assault and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the Lankan army from the area.
>
> "At the same time, we give no political support to the LTTE—bourgeois nationalists who, carrying out the logic of nationalism, have staged their own inter-ethnic attacks on Sinhalese villagers and expelled Muslims from the historic Tamil city of Jaffna, the capital of the northern region, while employing murderous violence against other Tamil nationalist groups."

In the wake of the devastating bloodbath, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) regime of Mahinda Rajapaksa staged grotesque chauvinist rallies in Colombo and declared a national holiday. Meant to further degrade an already defeated Tamil population, this sickening triumphalism underscores that the communal divisions fostered by the regime and its predecessors are deeper than ever. What we wrote at the time of the government-orchestrated anti-Tamil pogroms in 1983 retains all its force and more today:

> "The government-orchestrated Sinhala-chauvinist bloodbath against the Tamil people in the small Indian Ocean island nation of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) has catastrophically altered for the foreseeable future the prospects for common class struggle between the Sinhalese working class and the oppressed Tamil minority."
>
> —"Massacre in Sri Lanka,"
> *Spartacist* No. 35, Autumn 1983

Our organization had always upheld the right to Tamil self-determination while counseling against its exercise, arguing in favour of united working-class struggle for Tamil freedom and socialist revolution in Lanka and its extension through the Indian subcontinent. But, as we wrote, "in the wake of the mass killing of Tamils, the bitterness and hostility between the peoples of Ceylon has evidently become insurmountable at least in the short run." Thus we raised the call *for the right of Tamil Eelam*:

> "The bloody communal struggle argues that even with proletarian revolution in Ceylon and South Asia generally, a *federated* socialist republic in Ceylon will be necessary to achieve the unity of Tamils and Sinhalese on a basis of justice and equality (and to take into account Sinhalese fears of vengeance at the hands of the millions of Tamils in south India)."

At the same time, we noted that the prospects for an independent Tamil capitalist state in the arid and underdeveloped North were not good. Nor would the formation of such a state ensure the national survival of the Tamils, who were (and remain) interpenetrated with the Sinhalese majority throughout much of the island. On the other hand, the establishment of a federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka would be a beacon to the oppressed and subjugated masses throughout the subcontinent, including among the 65 million Tamils across the Palk Strait in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

The struggle of the Tamils is today at its most desperate pass. Drawing the lessons from a bitter history is difficult but necessary for pro-working-class elements, Tamil and Sinhalese alike. The once-Trotskyist Lanka Sama Samaja Party abandoned the interests of the proletariat and the defense of the Tamil people when it entered the Sinhala-chauvinist government of the SLFP in 1964.

Today the struggle to forge a Trotskyist party in Lanka must begin with the understanding that the eradication of national oppression and true social progress for the peoples of Lanka and the region will come when the barbaric rule of capital and the divisions inherited from imperialist domination are overturned through socialist revolution. Lasting national and class justice for the Tamil working people will be secured through permanent revolution—rule by the workers and peasants in a socialist federation of South Asia, and the extension of proletarian revolutions into the imperialist centers.■

WV Photo

Demonstration in New York initiated by Spartacist League protested attacks on Tamils, June 1981. Spartacist placard in Sinhalese reads: "Forward to a revolutionary workers and peasants government in Sri Lanka!"

Mehring...

(continued from page 2)

basis, so that it can achieve the necessary clarity about where the power of ideas is drawn from. Human beings make their own history, certainly, but *how* they make history, this is dependent in each case upon how clear or unclear they are in their heads about the material connections between things. Ideas do not arise out of nothing, but are the product of the social process of production, and the more accurately an idea reflects this process, the more powerful it is. The human spirit does not stand *above*, but *within* the historical development of human society; it has grown out of, in and with material production. Only since this production has begun to develop out of a highly variegated bustle into simple and great contradictions, has it been able to recognize the whole relationship; and only after these latter contradictions have died or been overcome, will it win domination over social production, and will the "prehistory of man come to an end" (Marx); and then "men will make their own history with full consciousness, and the leap of man from the realm of necessity into that of freedom" will take place (Engels)....

Only historical materialism demonstrates the law of this development of thought, and finds the root of this law in that which first made man into man, the production and reproduction of immediate life. That beggarly pride which once decried Darwinism as the "theory of the apes" may struggle against this, and find solace in the thought that the human spirit flickers like an unfathomable will-o'-the-wisp, and with Godlike creative powers fashions a new world out of nothing. This superstition was dealt with by [German Enlightenment-era writer and philosopher] Lessing, both in his mockery of the "bald ability to act now in one way, now in another, under exactly the same circumstances," and also through his wise words:

> The pot of iron
> Likes to be lifted with silver tongs
> From the flame, the easier to think itself
> A pot of silver.

We can deal more briefly with the accusation that historical materialism denies all moral standards. It is certainly not the task of the history researcher to use moral standards. He should tell us how things were on the basis of an objective scientific investigation. We do not demand to know what he thinks about them according to his subjective moral outlook. "Moral standards" are caught up, involved in a continuous transformation, and for the living generation to impose on former generations its changing standards of today, is like measuring the geological strata against the flying sand of the dunes. Schlosser, Gervinus and Ranke, and Janssen [German historians]—each of them has a different moral standard, each has his own class morals, and even more faithfully than the times they depict, they reflect in their works the classes they speak for. And it goes without saying that it would be no different if a proletarian writer of history were to make rash criticisms of former times from the moral standpoint of his class today.

In this respect historical materialism denies all moral standards—but in this respect alone. It bans them from the *study of history* because they make all *scientific* study of history impossible.

But if the accusation means that historical materialism denies the role of moral driving forces in history, then let us repeat: the precise opposite is true. It does not deny them at all, but rather for the first time makes it possible to recognize them. In the "material, scientifically determinable upheaval of the economic conditions of production" it has the only certain yardstick for investigating the sometimes slower, sometimes faster changes in moral outlook. These too are in the last analysis the product of the form of production, and thus Marx opposed the Nibelungen tales of Richard Wagner, who tried in the modern manner to make his love stories more piquant by means of a little incest, with the fitting words: "In remote antiquity the sister was the wife and that was moral." Just as thoroughly as it clears up the question of the great men who are supposed to have made history, historical materialism also deals with the images of historical characters that come and go in history according to their favour and disfavour in the eyes of different parties. It is able to do every historical personality justice, because it knows how to recognize the driving forces which have determined their deeds and omissions, and it can sketch in the fine shadings which cannot be attained by the coarser "moral standards" of the ideological writing of history.■

North Korea...

(continued from page 1)

Guardian (27 May). "In April 2003, North Korea drew the obvious conclusion from the US and British aggression against Iraq. The war showed, it commented at the time, 'that to allow disarmament through inspections does not help avert a war, but rather sparks it'."

Our defense of North Korea is based on the fact that, under the protection of the Soviet Army following World War II, the workers and peasants expropriated the capitalists and landlords. However, the North Korean workers state was deformed from its inception, with the working class deprived of political power under the rule of Kim Il Sung's regime, a nationalist and parasitic bureaucratic caste resting atop the collectivized economy. We stand for the unconditional military defense of North Korea and the other remaining deformed workers states—China, Vietnam and Cuba—against imperialist attack and domestic counterrevolution. To renounce the defense of states that have overturned capitalism is to renounce the fight for international socialist revolution.

Were it not for the nuclear arsenal of the former Soviet workers state acting as a deterrent, U.S. imperialism would have had free rein to crush the revolutions in China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. The U.S. and its allies, under the flag of the UN, killed some *three million* people during the Korean War of 1950-53. This was part of the drive to crush the revolutionary upsurge of Korean workers and peasants in the South and to overturn the social revolution in the North—intended as a stepping stone to overturning the 1949 Chinese Revolution. Since it was fought to a stalemate by Korean and Chinese forces, the U.S. has maintained a massive military presence in South Korea, with some 28,500 troops stationed there today. This past week the U.S. and South Korean military went on high alert, elevating its "Watch Conditions" to "Stage Two," its second highest level. ***All U.S. troops and bases out of South Korea now!***

A strategic goal of U.S. imperialism is the restoration of capitalism in China, the largest of the remaining deformed workers states. This makes it all the more criminal that the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy expressed its "resolute opposition" to North Korea's nuclear weapon test. Beijing has also called on North Korea to return to the "six nation talks," aimed at disarming North Korea. This demonstrates the bankruptcy of the nationalist program of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which promotes the anti-Marxist dogma of building "socialism in one country." In practice, this has always meant opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution and accommodation to world imperialism, as can also be seen in the North Korean regime's call for "peaceful reunification" with the capitalist South.

As we noted following a North Korean rocket launch in April ("Defend North Korea!" *WV* No. 934, 10 April):

> "What is desperately needed is the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party with a proletarian internationalist perspective to lead the struggle for the revolutionary reunification of Korea—for a socialist revolution in the South and workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats in the North. The fight for revolutionary reunification must be linked to the struggle for proletarian political revolution in China and the extension of proletarian power to Japan, the industrial heartland of Asia, as well as to the U.S. imperialist colossus."■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Heroic Abortion Provider
Dr. George Tiller Assassinated

JUNE 1—The bloody war against women's right to abortion waged by "right to life" terrorists has claimed yet another life. On Sunday morning in Wichita, Kansas, Dr. George Tiller was gunned down in the foyer of his church. The service was just beginning when a man pulled a handgun and shot Tiller in cold blood as he served as an usher; Tiller's wife was in the choir. Authorities have arrested a suspect, Scott Roeder, who "has long discussed violence against abortion providers and belonged to right-wing militia groups," according to the *Los Angeles Times* (1 June).

Despite massive harassment, legal and extralegal, for over 35 years Dr. Tiller heroically provided women with abortions, including late in pregnancy. Just hours after his death his family issued a moving statement, declaring: "George dedicated his life to providing women with high-quality health care despite frequent threats and violence. We ask that he be remembered as a good husband, father and grandfather and a dedicated servant on behalf of the rights of women everywhere."

Tiller's Wichita clinic, Women's Health Care Services, was one of the very few providers of "late-term" abortions remaining in the U.S. Tiller himself had been in the eye of the storm for decades. In 1991, tens of thousands of "Operation Rescue" fanatics blockaded his clinic for six weeks. In 1993, Tiller was shot in both arms. His clinic has been bombed and vandalized—as have other clinics across the country.

In 2007, the state of Kansas charged Tiller with 19 misdemeanor counts of violating a law requiring two doctors, without financial or legal ties to each other, to sign off on abortions done late in pregnancy. He was acquitted in March. But within moments of the verdict, the state's health board announced that it was launching yet another prosecution—one that was still ongoing when Tiller was murdered. The repeated legal persecution of Tiller and other abortion providers has served to embolden the murderous bigots who terrorize patients and clinic staff and murder doctors.

Between 1993 and 1998 anti-abortion terrorists murdered *seven people* for providing abortions: Dr. David Gunn, shot dead in Pensacola, Florida, 1993; Dr. John Britton, shot dead along with an escort in Pensacola a year later; Lee Ann Nichols and Shannon Lowney, shot dead in a clinic in Brookline, Massachusetts, 1994; a security guard killed and a nurse severely wounded in a Birmingham,

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Hutmacher/Wichita Eagle

1941–2009

Asylum Now for Tamil Refugees!
Massacre in Sri Lanka:
Defend the Tamil People!

Sri Lanka Army

AFP

Murderous offensive by Sri Lankan army has destroyed remnants of Tamil mini-state. Right: Tamil civilians in April, among the hundreds of thousands driven into prison camps.

The following article was written by our comrades of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste of Canada, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

The savage 26-year war waged by the Sri Lankan government in the North and East of the Indian Ocean island ended on May 18 with the destruction of the remnants of the Tamil mini-state and the execution of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. But if the goals of the blood-drenched Sinhala-chauvinist regime have been achieved, its merciless repression of the Tamil people and their national rights continues.

Since January, at least 8,000 Tamils and perhaps as many as 20,000 have been killed in a war that had already taken at least 70,000 lives. Cutting through the wall of press censorship, reports are emerging that an estimated 300,000 Tamils—40 percent of them children—are now imprisoned in a network of prison camps and interrogation centers. Particularly chilling was a May 23 account by the Toronto *Globe and Mail*'s Doug Saunders, who reported that the detainees "are not just those who have fled the violence, but the entire civilian population of the northeastern conflict area, which is being swept clean of inhabitants by the military." Those in the camps will be "screened" as a precondition to release, a process which a government spokesman says could take up to two years.

Against the bloody vengeance of the Lankan government, the international working class must rally to the defense of the Tamil people. Tamil émigrés in Canada, Britain and elsewhere now watch in helpless agony, knowing their families could be dead or held in the army's camps. We stand with them demanding asylum now for Tamil refugees!

In the months leading up to this catastrophe, in cities around the world Tamils have carried out protest after massive protest. In Toronto where the 200,000-strong Tamil community is one of the largest outside South Asia, the demonstrations were among the biggest in the city's history. The sight of tens of thousands of angry Tamils choking major Toronto streets in a sea of Tamil Eelam flags (which resemble the flag of the LTTE) sparked howls of outrage from bourgeois politicians and journalists.

The U.S., Britain, the European Union and Canada had all banned the Tigers earlier, declaring them a "terrorist" organization. In doing so, the imperialist powers effectively gave the green light to the Lankan regime in its murderous army offensive. This underscores that the repeated calls on the Canadian, U.S. and other imperialists to intervene on behalf of the Tamils could only be in vain, for they have overwhelmingly supported the Lankan government's war against the Tamil people. From the start we denounced the bans on the LTTE, which signaled the repressive attacks on exile Tamil organizations that continue to this day. It is in the clear interest of all working people to defend Tamil organizations against state repression.

The Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste

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WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 939 | 3 July 2009

Imperialists Hands Off Iran!

Down With the Clerical Regime!

No Support to "Reform" Mullahs!

AP

JUNE 29—A few short months after celebrating the 30th anniversary of its bloody and oppressive rule, Iran's Islamic Republic has been convulsed by the largest protests since the "Iranian revolution" of 1978-79. The massive demonstrations were sparked by the widespread belief that incumbent president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, supported by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had stolen the June 12 presidential election from opposition candidate Mir Hussein Moussavi. After a week in which hundreds of thousands filled the streets of Tehran and other cities chanting "Death to the dictator" and "Allah Akbar" ("God is great"), the regime struck back. Scores of demonstrators were reportedly shot by the hated paramilitary Basij militias, linked to the elite Revolutionary Guard, as well as by police, while hundreds have been locked up in the notorious Evin Prison. The International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the U.S. section, calls on the international workers movement to demand: ***Free all anti-government protesters!***

The fraud surrounding Ahmadinejad's re-election became a focus for the broad discontents felt across Iranian society, from women compelled to wear the *hijab* (veil) and youth punished for public displays of affection to widespread poverty and growing unemployment. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets demanding new elections. Certainly, plenty of signs indicate voter fraud. But the elections—vote-rigging or not—were themselves a fraud, controlled by the mullahs, who approved all candidates in advance.

Part of the basis of support for Moussavi is his call for vague "reforms" on women's rights and other social questions. But Moussavi, one of the founders of the Islamic Republic, is no less a butcher than his opponents in the current regime. Under Moussavi's reign as prime minister from 1981 to 1989, untold thousands of leftists, Kurds and women's rights activists were slaughtered in Iran's prisons and buried in mass graves. Hundreds of thousands more died in the bloody war with Iraq in the 1980s. In 1999, militant student protests were drowned in blood by the "reform" government of then-president Mohammad Khatami, a current ally of Moussavi.

Getty

Top: Iranian riot police assault Moussavi supporters at Tehran University, June 14. Above: Mass demonstration in Tehran protests election results, June 18.

While the forces demonstrating in the streets of Iranian cities are heterogeneous, they are politically subordinate to one side of what is essentially a falling out between rival factions within the ruling clerical elite. A key ally of Moussavi is the notoriously corrupt former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani; known as the "pistachio king," he may well be the richest man in Iran. Moussavi and Rafsanjani have called to further "open up" the economy through privatizations and foreign investment. They have also sought to tone down the "anti-imperialist" demagogy associated with Ahmadinejad. Abroad, the protests are being cheered by a spectrum of Iranian political forces ranging from royalists to bourgeois democrats and the remnants of the left. The workers and oppressed of Iran have *no interest* in supporting *either* of the cabals fighting over how best to pursue the mullahs' bloody rule.

The U.S. and British imperialists have sought to intervene in the political turmoil, beefing up their radio broadcasts into Iran. Obama declared that he was "appalled and outraged" by the crackdown in Iran. Meanwhile, nearly 200,000 U.S. troops continue to ravage Iraq and Afghanistan on Iran's eastern and western borders, while U.S. special forces carry out clandestine operations within Iran itself. After 30 years of the oppressive rule of the mullahs, there are doubtless many in Iran who have illusions in Western bourgeois democracy or see the "democratic" imperialists as a potential ally. Such illusions may have been further fueled by the initial softer (than the war-crazed Bush gang) tone adopted by Obama toward Tehran upon taking office.

Whether administered by Democrats or Republicans, U.S. imperialism is the deadliest enemy of working people around the globe. It was the CIA, in collaboration with the British, that organized the 1953 coup that overthrew then-prime minister Mohammad Mossadeq to reverse his nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. The imperialists then reinstalled the Shah into power and backed the tyrannical, blood-drenched Pahlavi dynasty until its overthrow in 1979. Down with the imperialist occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq! U.S. out of Pakistan and Central Asia! Imperialists hands off Iran!

The U.S. imperialists and their nuclear-armed Israeli allies have repeatedly threatened military action against Iran's nuclear program. In the face of such threats, we say that Iran needs nukes to deter such an attack. Neighboring Iraq's lack of "weapons of mass destruction," including nukes, emboldened the U.S. to invade and occupy the country, leading to the horrific carnage and occupation of the last six years. While calling for military defense of neocolonial countries like Iraq and Iran against imperialist attack, we do not give an iota of political support to their rulers, who lord it over their "own" oppressed masses. We say: Down with all the sheiks, colonels, mullahs and Zionist

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For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party in Iran to Fight for Workers Revolution!

Defend Orange County Teacher James Corbett!

For the Teaching of Science! Down With Religious Obscurantism!

LOS ANGELES—On May 1, a federal judge ruled that James Corbett, a 20-year history teacher at Capistrano Valley High School in Orange County, California, violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment—i.e., the separation of church and state. Corbett's "transgression" was to denounce another teacher at the school, John Peloza, for his efforts to block the teaching of evolution in favor of anti-science "creationism," which Corbett accurately described as "religious, superstitious nonsense." The judge outrageously ruled, "Corbett states an unequivocal belief that creationism is 'superstitious nonsense.' The Court cannot discern a legitimate secular purpose in this statement, even when considered in context."

The obvious secular purpose is scientific truth, and the court's ruling is a dangerous attack on science, free speech and the separation of church and state. It can only embolden the Christian fundamentalists while having a chilling effect on teachers opposed to the promotion of religious obscurantism. As one student said at a 300-strong rally to support Dr. Corbett in December 2007, "It's hard to teach European history without being somewhat critical of organized religion."

The lawsuit was brought by Corbett's former student Chad Farnan and his family. It was planned well in advance, as Farnan secretly recorded many hours of class discussion. Farnan's family was represented by Advocates for Faith and Freedom, a dubious outfit that seeks out cases specifically to push their goal of an American society with an unquestioning, God-fearing citizenry under the straitjacket of the Puritanical family, where women have no rights that men are required to respect. This group has advocated strongly for Proposition 8 and the Bill Clinton-era Defense of Marriage Act, which ban gay marriage in California and federally respectively. They have filed another case in California to deny the right of transgender students to be recognized by their gender identity as opposed to their genitalia. In its mission statement, Advocates for Faith and Freedom concludes: "We recognize that America was founded on Judeo-Christian principles. In today's culture, that foundation is slowly being eroded by legal challenges to traditional family structure, religious freedom, basic property rights, and parental rights, and by other court decisions that have created a society increasingly devoid of the message and influence of God."

These religious bigots to the contrary, many of the "founding fathers" (those who owned slaves and those who didn't) were products of the Enlightenment and deists who, while believing that a god created the universe, rejected the Judeo-Christian concepts of faith, miracles and divine intervention. In an opinion piece printed in the *Orange County Register* (8 May), Dr. Corbett quoted James Madison, coauthor of the U.S. Constitution, "Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind and unfits it for every noble enterprise, every expanded prospect." But the bourgeoisie the world over has long ceased being the revolutionary class it once was. One can look at Barack Obama, who, while promising to "restore science to its rightful place," peppered his Cairo speech with references to the Bible, Talmud and Koran, and concluded, "May God's peace be upon you." An opponent of gay marriage, Obama has also made clear his support to the Defense of Marriage Act.

While the teaching of evolution in the schools has been under attack since the infamous 1925 Scopes trial, it was the efforts to regiment the population into social conformity during the Reagan years of the 1980s that have ushered in nearly 30 years of attacks on science and the gains of the Enlightenment. This picked up further steam with the election of George W. Bush in 2000, leading to challenges to the teaching of evolution in 43 states.

Against such reactionary efforts, the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee submitted an *amici curiae* brief in 1985 to the United States Supreme Court against a Louisiana law mandating the teaching of creationism. We wrote:

> "This country used to be notable for the relatively democratic nature of public education—largely a product of the Civil War and struggles by an ethnically diverse working class for social reform.

Keith May

James Corbett

> Today there is an all sided assault on public education, of which the current attack, if successful, will render future generations ignorant and prey to the superstitions of our ancestors."

In the brief, we pointed to a statement by historic American Trotskyist James P. Cannon, who wrote in 1951, on the occasion of a proposal to appoint a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican:

> "Under...the First Amendment, free thinkers and atheists, heathens and public sinners, who are very numerous in this country, have had a chance to breathe and spread enlightenment without fear of the dungeon and the rack. The First Amendment has been a protecting shield for the Children of Light and has enabled them to make their great contributions to literature, art and science. A breach in this provision of the Constitution, leading to its eventual repeal, would be an unspeakable calamity aiding and strengthening the forces of reaction and obscurantism here and all over the world."
>
> —"Church and State," reprinted in *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)

Under capitalism, the schools are supposed to inculcate the views of the ruling class in the next generation and help promote their regimentation in bourgeois society. What the judge really meant when he ruled that Dr. Corbett violated the separation of church and state is that he deviated from this judge's view of the means by which teachers are supposed to carry out this function.

Dr. Corbett, who may still appeal the ruling, faces possible monetary damages and an injunction against making any future statements disparaging religion. Furthermore, he might still face discipline from the campus administration. We demand: *Drop all charges against Dr. James Corbett! For the teaching of evolution, not "creationism"—or its PC guise, "intelligent design"—in public schools!* ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

Lenin on the Struggle Against Opportunism

In his struggle against opportunism, which represents the pernicious influence of bourgeois ideology in the workers movement, V.I. Lenin led what became a historic fight at the 1903 Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, resulting in a split in the Russian Marxist movement. The majority (the Bolsheviks), led by Lenin, and the minority (the Mensheviks), led by Julius Martov, broke nominally over the definition of party membership. However, as Lenin emphasizes in the excerpt below from One Step Forward, Two Steps Back *(1904), a key component of the fight was over opportunism. The 1903 split bore world-historic fruit when in opposition to the Mensheviks, Lenin's Bolshevik Party led the Russian workers to the seizure of power in the October Revolution of 1917.*

One step forward, two steps back.... It happens in the lives of individuals, and it happens in the history of nations and in the development of parties. It would be the most criminal cowardice to doubt even for a moment the inevitable and complete triumph of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy, of proletarian organisation and Party discipline. We have already won a great deal, and we must go on fighting, undismayed by reverses, fighting steadfastly, scorning the philistine methods of circle wrangling, doing our very utmost to preserve the hard-won single Party tie linking all Russian Social-Democrats, and striving by dint of persistent and systematic work to give all Party members, and the workers in particular, a full and conscious understanding of the duties of Party members, of the struggle at the Second Party Congress, of all the causes and all the stages of our divergence, and of the utter disastrousness of opportunism, which, in the sphere of organisation as in the sphere of our programme and our tactics, helplessly surrenders to the bourgeois psychology, uncritically adopts the point of view of bourgeois democracy, and blunts the weapon of the class struggle of the proletariat.

—V.I. Lenin, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back (The Crisis in Our Party)* (1904)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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The closing date for news in this issue is June 30

No. 939 **3 July 2009**

Drop the Charges Against the SF8 Now!

The following June 6 protest letter was sent by the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—to California Attorney General Jerry Brown.

The Partisan Defense Committee demands an immediate end to the state's vindictive prosecution of the San Francisco 8—Richard Brown, Francisco Torres, Ray Boudreaux, Henry "Hank" Jones, Harold Taylor, Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom)—who were arrested in 2007 on frame-up charges of murder and conspiracy in relation to the 1971 death of San Francisco police officer John Young. In more than two years of court hearings, the prosecution has not produced a shred of evidence against these former Black Panthers. Now they face another three months of preliminary hearings, beginning on June 8, to determine if the case will go to trial. The relentless persecution of these men, all of them in their late 50s or older, is a continuation of the government's decades-long vendetta against the Black Liberation Army and other former Panthers. We demand that all the charges against the SF8 be dropped ***now***!

For close to 40 years, the police have tried to pin the killing of Young on these men. In 1973, two San Francisco police inspectors interrogated three Panther members including one of the current defendants, Harold Taylor, who had been arrested by the New Orleans cops. The three were tortured for several days—stripped naked, blindfolded and beaten, covered with blankets soaked in boiling water, shocked with electric cattle prods on their genitals and anus—until they "confessed." In 1975, the charges were thrown out of court on the basis that their confessions had been coerced through torture. Thirty years later, the police and government prosecutors were still unsuccessful in obtaining indictments of any of these men despite convening California state and federal grand juries—first in 2003-2004 and later in May and August 2005. But this frame-up was revived again in 2007 when the SF8 were rounded up and arrested on orders from your office of California State Attorney General.

More than two years of court hearings have produced no evidence tying these

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"War on Terror" Targets Immigrants, Workers

The following article is reprinted from Workers Hammer *No. 206 (Spring 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

WORKERS HAMMER

AP

February 23: Binyam Mohamed arriving in London from Guantánamo Bay after seven years of confinement and torture.

Binyam Mohamed, British Imperialism and Torture

Since the time of his arrest in Pakistan in April 2002, Binyam Mohamed has been chained, beaten, slashed with scalpels, sleep deprived, held for weeks on end in darkness and hauled from one prison to the next, from Pakistan to Morocco to Afghanistan. Caged at Guantánamo Bay for the past four years, he was finally released and arrived back in Britain on February 23. There has never been a shred of evidence against him of any crime. Mohamed's U.S. military-appointed lawyer, Lieutenant Colonel Yvonne Bradley, told a press conference that his treatment "would make waterboarding seem like child's play" (*Guardian Unlimited*, 11 February).

As Mohamed courageously exposes his torture at the hands of the CIA and their stooges and pursues legal actions in British and U.S. courts, the complicity of the British state in his "rendition" and torture is being dragged into the light of day. "We unreservedly condemn any practice of 'extraordinary rendition' to torture. We have always condemned torture," proclaimed the Foreign Office (*Independent*, 10 March), while the whole world can observe the bloody fingerprints of MI5 all over the story of Binyam Mohamed. A special UN report issued on 9 March named Britain as among countries that have aided the U.S. "through providing intelligence or seizing suspects" (*BBC News* online, 10 March). The report says, "UK intelligence personnel, for instance, conducted or witnessed just over 2,000 interviews in Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay and Iraq" (independent.co.uk, 10 March).

Having fled Ethiopia in 1992 as a teenager, Mohamed sought asylum in Britain and was eventually granted legal right to remain. He was swept up by the U.S. "anti-terror" frenzy while travelling in Pakistan a few months after 9/11 and interrogated by MI5 there before being "rendered" by the CIA to a prison in Morocco. During 18 months there he was tortured by his U.S.-instructed interrogators who repeatedly slashed his chest and genitals with a scalpel. The Americans were bent on extracting Mohamed's confession to a web of "terror" crimes including a nuclear "dirty bomb" plot. They claimed he conspired in the bomb plot with Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was kidnapped in 2002 by the U.S. government, framed and tortured as a "terror suspect." "They had fed me enough through their questions for me to make up what they wanted to hear," Mohamed told the *Mail on Sunday* (8 March). "I confessed to it all." In January 2004 he was again moved, to the CIA prison in Kabul, Afghanistan, where his tortures included being chained, able to neither stand fully nor sit, for eight days continuously.

"The very worst moment came when I realised in Morocco that the people who were torturing me were receiving questions and materials from British intelligence," said Mohamed (*Guardian Unlimited*, 23 February). According to his attorneys from the civil rights law group Reprieve, in one memo disclosed in U.S. court hearings, MI5 told the CIA: "We believe that our knowledge of the UK scene may provide contextual background useful during any continuing interview process" (*Guardian*, 9 March). It continues, "This will place the detainee under more direct pressure and would seem to be the most effective way of obtaining intelligence on Mohamed's activities/plans concerning the UK." The government's attempt to cover up British support to torture failed when it was exposed that foreign secretary David Miliband blocked the release of 42 secret documents necessary to Mohamed's *habeas corpus* case (challenging his detention) in the courts. According to the *Guardian* website (16 February), Miliband's office "solicited a letter from the US state department to back up his claim that if the evidence was disclosed, Washington might stop sharing intelligence with Britain. The claim persuaded the high court judges to suppress what they called 'powerful evidence' relating to Mohamed's ill-treatment."

Revelations of British participation in torture predictably elicit "shocked" calls for investigations from all quarters. Behind such calls lies panic that British "democracy" is besmirched by the torture revelations. Just as the Obama regime is charged by the U.S. bourgeoisie with the task of restoring the myth of mass-murdering American imperialism as upholder of "human rights," elements of the British bourgeoisie need the moral credibility of British imperialism whitewashed, and fast. A spokesman for Human Rights Watch, speaking after British defence secretary John Hutton publicly admitted that Britain has handed over "terror suspects" in Iraq to the U.S., said: "The drip, drip of allegations and admissions does huge damage to the international reputation of the UK and the ability of our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan to say they are fighting on the side of justice and truth" (*Guardian*, 27 February).

But from the Indian subcontinent to its African colonies, from the occupation of Palestine after World War I to Iraq today, British imperialism, under both Tory and Labour governments, has always used torture, an indispensable tool for the subjugation of a people. In Northern Ireland, Republican prisoners interned without trial were routinely tortured by the RUC: hooded, beaten, forced to run obstacle courses over broken glass. Thousands died from starvation and torture in British concentration camps during the suppression of the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya in the 1950s. As Seumas Milne wrote in the *Guardian* (27 January 2005), British soldiers "nailed the limbs of Kikuyu guerrillas [in Kenya] to crossroads posts and had themselves photographed with the heads of Malayan 'terrorists' in a war that cost 10,000 lives.... Britain's empire was built on vast ethnic cleansing, enslavement, enforced racial hierarchy, land theft and merciless exploitation."

In Germany between 1945 and 1947, Britain ran a secret torture camp at Bad Nenndorf where suspected communists as well as Nazi and SS prisoners were beaten, starved and frozen—evidence of which was buried in government files until 2005 when the *Guardian* secured a report on the torture centre under the Freedom of Information Act. Some of the subsequently released photos showed suspected communists whom the British tortured in their efforts to obtain information about Soviet military plans.

Another form of torture continues today within Britain against 15 Muslim men among those rounded up and interned as suspected "terrorists" after 9/11. They cannot legally be deported and in 2004 were ordered released from Belmarsh prison on "control orders." Introducing her article "Besieged in Britain" (*Race & Class*, January 2009), Victoria Brittain describes their shattered lives:

> "Held for years without charge, under restricted regimes of twelve to twenty-four hour curfews, with virtually no access to the wider world and kept in ignorance of the alleged evidence against them, the impact on them and their families has been devastating. Many had come to Britain as refugees seeking a safe haven: some have been driven into madness, some have attempted suicide, some have left their families and returned voluntarily to regimes where they may face imprisonment and torture. The mental and physical health impacts on the men and their families, of an inhumanity that beggars belief, masked under the bureaucracy of 'control orders,' 'SIAC deportation bail' and torturous legal processes, is here unveiled."

Chapman/Guzelian

Workers Hammer

Labour government's "war on terror" fuels attacks on Muslims. Left: Muslim-owned store firebombed in Leeds, July 2005. Right: March 2005 protest against planned extradition of Babar Ahmad, victim of "anti-terror" witchhunt.

Trade Unions Must Oppose the "War on Terror"

The capitalist state—the core of which is cops, courts, prisons and armed forces—exists to maintain the property and profits of the bourgeoisie through the suppression of the working class and oppressed. Stigmatising Muslims and immigrants as the "enemy within," the Labour government has fuelled racism which divides and weakens the working class. In its "war on terror" the government has calculated it can get away with massively augmenting the state's machinery for repression, and in this it has so far been correct thanks to the cowardly chauvinist leaders of the trade unions. As the organised battalions of the proletariat, the trade unions have the social power to put some teeth into the fight against the racist "war on terror." But their ability to fight is hampered by the Labourite trade-union leaders

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Labor Government Demands Sacrifice from Workers

Recession Australia:
Unemployment, Racism, Militarism

The following article is reprinted from Australasian Spartacist *No. 205 (Winter 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

Australasian SPARTACIST

MAY 30—As the capitalist economic crisis unfolds, millions around the world are facing immiseration. In Australia, over 600,000 are now officially unemployed and this figure is expected to double before the year's end. In its attempts to "save capitalism," the federal ALP [Australian Labor Party] government has spent more than $80 billion in the past year. This, along with plummeting tax revenues, will contribute to a projected $300 billion national debt within five years. While government ministers claim they are spending to save jobs, their real concern is kick-starting capitalist investment.

The May federal budget continues the onslaught against workers and the poor. Impoverished aged pensioners received a few extra dollars, to be paid for by raising the pension age by two years. While the employed are expected to work harder for less, the unemployed and others on pensions such as single mothers got no increase to their meagre payments. Meanwhile unemployed youth under 20 who haven't completed high school will lose their unemployment benefits, and their parents will have their family tax benefits slashed, if they don't pursue some form of "education"!

Under the reactionary rubric of "nation building," the prime minister, Kevin Rudd, cynically trumpets the budget's projected $22 billion infrastructure expenditure as a pro-working-class measure to create jobs. In reality, it simply fulfils Labor's pre-election commitment to big business to make Australian capitalism more competitive by reversing the former Howard government's neglect of key communications, transport and port facilities. Meanwhile, the budget allocates a comparative pittance to the crumbling health and education systems which, along with public transport, have fallen into decay through years of capitalist neglect.

The Laborite trade-union tops, who view the world through the lens of the bourgeoisie, are working overtime with their parliamentary "mates" to rebuild confidence in the capitalist system. Imbibing in Rudd's "nation building," in response to growing unemployment they are calling to bail out the bosses' industries using workers' taxes while telling workers to sacrifice in the "national interest," i.e., for the bosses' profits. For example, in April, General Motors Holden management and union tops cooked up a deal that halved shift times, cutting penalty rates [overtime] for workers. Described by the federal ALP government as "a model," such deals slash wages, undermine hard-won union conditions and devastate the livelihoods of workers.

Alongside this, the government is slashing the immigration intake and heavily funding and enforcing xenophobic "border control" measures. They are expanding the cop and military takeover of Aboriginal lands to town camps around Alice Springs and continuing to enforce racist welfare "quarantining" against besieged Aboriginal people. This all-sided reaction is buttressed by draconian "anti-terror" and anti-union laws, the latter almost identical to those of the [previous John] Howard government apart from the name. The Labor government's despicable anti-immigrant measures include using the navy to target refugees fleeing the horrors of the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the genocidal war against the oppressed Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. Prevented from landing in the country, refugees have been intercepted off shore and dumped at the government's Indian Ocean Christmas Island detention centre where many await deportation, which can mean death.

AP

Chantal Parslow

Above: Labor prime minister Kevin Rudd announces plans for massive armed forces buildup, Sydney, May 2. Below: Australian navy intercepts desperate Afghan asylum seekers in April. Earlier, five drowned and scores were injured when another Afghan refugee boat, seized by navy, exploded.

For a Revolutionary, Internationalist Workers Party!

Defend the Chinese Deformed Workers State!

We Marxists stress that the future for workers in Australia lies in common struggle with the working masses of Asia against capitalist exploitation. Our fight for a workers republic of Australia is part of our perspective for socialist revolutions throughout Southeast Asia and beyond. Key to this proletarian internationalist perspective is our defence of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state that issued out of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. This revolution overthrew capitalist class rule, liberating the Chinese masses from the yoke of bloody imperialism, and led to the development of a collectivised economy that laid the basis for massive social progress. However, the workers state was deformed from its inception under the rule of Mao Zedong's peasant-based Chinese Communist Party regime, a Stalinist-nationalist bureaucratic caste resting atop the workers state. Despite capitalist inroads under decades of the bureaucracy's "market reforms," China's economy remains dominated by state-controlled banks and the core of its industry remains collectivised, an historic gain for the world's working class that the imperialists seek to overthrow.

Unlike reformist groups such as the Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP) who declare China capitalist in order to join counterrevolutionary causes from "Free Tibet" to "independence for Taiwan," we Trotskyists fight for the unconditional military defence of China and the other deformed workers states of North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution from within. In direct opposition to the imperialists' provocative threats against North Korea following its recent missile tests and underground detonation, we note that our defence of China and North Korea includes *supporting* their testing and possession of nuclear weapons as a necessary deterrent against the threat of annihilation by the nuclear-armed imperialists in Washington, backed by their lackeys in Canberra.

At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolution to oust the nationalist, Stalinist bureaucracies whose appeasement of imperialism and bureaucratic mismanagement pave the way for capitalist restorationist forces. A genuinely communist government in China, based on workers and peasants councils and an internationalist program, would look to the extension of proletarian power through the struggle for socialist revolutions throughout the region, and particularly in the imperialist centres of Japan, North America, Europe and Australia.

While the global economic crisis has slowed China's economy, for decades it has escaped the cyclical crises inherent to capitalism and been growing at a rate unmatched by any capitalist country. As a consequence, over the last 15 years the Australian bourgeoisie has accrued enormous wealth from mineral sales to China, now Australia's largest two-way trading partner. With the Japanese economy currently spiralling deeper into recession, the Australian bourgeoisie's reliance on exports to China has increased markedly such that many bourgeois economists look to China to pull Australian capitalism out of recession.

In this framework, earlier this year a xenophobic anti-China backlash erupted over Chinese state-owned companies seeking to invest in capital-starved and crippled Australian mining companies. This media-driven campaign, saturated with "yellow peril" racism and overlain with "red menace" anti-Communism, targeted China for supposedly using the economic crisis to "seize control" of Australian resources, threatening "national security" including the highly secretive U.S. intelligence base at Pine Gap near Alice Springs. This was the context for the "security scare" whipped up around the ALP defence minister, Joel Fitzgibbon, whose friendship with a Chinese-Australian businesswoman was portrayed as a national security risk. Next, Kevin Rudd was admonished in Murdoch's *Australian* for a lack of transparency in his meetings with China's propaganda chief and for lobbying "for Beijing" because he argued that China should have a bigger say in the IMF. Such was the hysteria over investments, the Chinese ambassador felt compelled to call for "rational" discussion, noting that at the end of 2008 "less than 1 percent of total foreign investment in Australia" came from China (*Australian*, 2 April).

The government quickly made a slavish show of loyalty to the Australian capitalist rulers by denying an application by state-owned China Minmetals to invest in the moribund OZ Minerals' operation at Prominent Hill in South Australia on "security" grounds. Some experts opined that the application was rejected because the Chinese could "spy on" the Pine Gap base. It is not China which is targeting the U.S. and Australia but the opposite! Pine Gap, which collects electronic intelligence from around the world, is part of a string of U.S. military installations and bases from South Korea to Central Asia that assist bloody imperialist interventions and enforce capitalist "stability" in Asia and the Pacific while targeting the

bureaucratically deformed workers states, particularly China.

Down With Australian Imperialist Militarism!

With their strategic aim of capitalist counterrevolution, the imperialists have for years pursued a combination of economic and political subversion while increasing military pressure against China. The recent xenophobic, anti-China hysteria further serves to line up the population here behind the counterrevolutionary aims of U.S. and Australian imperialism. The invention of a Chinese "threat" has been used by the bourgeoisie to legitimise the government's recently released Defence white paper, which projects a vast program of future military spending and hawkishly targets China. The biggest buildup of the Australian military since World War II, the proposed expansion of the airforce and navy includes up to 100 new fighter jets, more submarines and new classes of warships equipped with long-range cruise missiles.

Commenting on the Defence paper, a 27 April *Australian* editorial expressed the view of a section of the ruling class:

> "This is a plan for a world where Australia may need to defend its territory and economic interests from attack, and might have to project military power a great distance from home.... It appears the Government wants to cover contingencies from an East Timor-style deployment to fighting a regional power, for which read China, with a blue-water fleet."

Despite this braggadocio, Australia remains a second-rate jackal imperialist power that looks to the U.S. for protection. As such, they offer their services in dirty murderous operations from the southern Philippines to Afghanistan where Australia has recently sent an additional 450 troops as part of the blood-drenched U.S.-led occupation.

In this sparsely populated, white imperialist enclave in Asia, the counterrevolutionary U.S./Australia military alliance has always had the bipartisan support of the Liberal and Labor parties. Following the surrender of the British and Australian forces in Singapore to Japan in 1942, it was the Labor government of John Curtin which transferred Australian imperialism's allegiance from British to American imperialism. In response to the post-war nationalist and revolutionary ferment among the Asian masses, anti-communism and anti-Asian racism within the Australian ruling class fused in common fear of the spectre of social revolutions in Asia, particularly after the victory of Mao's Red Army in China in 1949.

In 1951, during the Korean War, the Liberal government of Robert Menzies signed the ANZUS pact to "contain" communism across Asia. In part the alliance was bought with Australian acquiescence to a peace treaty with Japan, which the U.S. sought to rebuild as an anti-communist bastion, including against the Soviet Union. The ANZUS alliance has seen the U.S. and Australian military act to slaughter millions of workers and peasants in counterrevolutionary wars from Korea to Vietnam. It was the Australian Secret Intelligence Service stationed in Jakarta that collaborated with the CIA to help orchestrate the 1965-66 anti-Communist bloodbath in Indonesia, which helped "stabilise" Southeast Asia under the imperialist yoke at the cost of more than a million lives.

Australia remains a strategic ally of the U.S., not least through hosting the U.S. military installations and spy bases. With its current police/military occupations of East Timor and the Solomons, Butterworth airforce base in Malaysia, counterterrorism base and training of "special forces" in Indonesia, and training troops in the southern Philippines, Australian imperialism plays an aggressive role in the region as a counterrevolutionary gendarme under the U.S. umbrella, while pursuing its own predatory neocolonial interests. Australia's projected military buildup is an expression of the *system* of capitalist imperialism. As Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin explained, under this system the ruling classes of the richest capitalist countries, ever in search of greater resources, new markets and sources of cheap labour, enforce their neocolonial looting and protect their spheres of exploitation through the coercive power of their respective states. It is an elementary principle for Marxists to uncompromisingly oppose the imperialist depredations of their "own" ruling class. An end to imperialism and imperialist wars will only be achieved through the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system internationally.

We Trotskyists, as proletarian internationalists, stand for class-struggle opposition to the Australian imperialist military. In the tradition of our revolutionary communist forebears—Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht and Lenin—we demand not one person, nor one cent for the Australian imperialist military! We say: Down with the U.S./Australia alliance! All U.S. bases and military installations out now! Implacably opposed to Australian imperialism, we demand that U.S./NATO/Australia get out of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and that Australia get out of Malaysia, the Philippines, East Timor, the Solomons and keep its bloody hands off the South Pacific!

Welfare line, Sydney. Capitalism devastates livelihoods of workers.

Down With Nationalist Laborite Protectionist Poison

Such a perspective is anathema to the pro-imperialist Laborite misleaders sitting atop the unions. This bureaucracy is historically based on a thin layer of privileged workers who are bought off by crumbs obtained from the profits from Australian imperialist exploitation abroad. This conditions their loyalty to the Australian imperialist military from the occupation of East Timor to the war in Afghanistan. The bureaucracy's overall role is to subordinate the interests of the working class to the bourgeoisie.

Illustrating the labour tops' promotion of collaboration and class peace with the national bourgeoisie is the ACTU's [Australian Council of Trade Unions] current protectionist "Buy Australian" campaign. They are reportedly proposing at their upcoming national congress that the government give local companies a 25-percent price advantage when bidding for contracts. Meanwhile, the CFMEU construction and mining union is appealing to the Rudd government to only provide "stimulus" monies to those employers "that give preference to local content" and "local labour" (*Australian*, 26 May).

The bureaucrats' protectionism was highlighted following the February decision by clothing manufacturer, Pacific Brands, to cut 1,850 jobs and move some operations "off shore." Rather than defend jobs, the response of the textile union tops was to beg the state to prop up domestic industry. Giving a "militant" cover to this grovelling nationalism, the Federation of Transport Unions (FTU), which includes the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), Transport Workers Union and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, organised a union "blockade" should this "iconic" Australian-owned company attempt to shift equipment overseas.

The FTU's action was backed by construction, firefighters, health services and ambulance unions who called for contracts with Pacific Brands to be cancelled if the move went ahead. Such was the poisonous nationalism associated with this campaign that the Sydney gutter press, *Daily Telegraph*, demanded, "Bring on the Blockade." Support from the *Telegraph* was in turn trumpeted on the MUA website. Falling in behind the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy are reformist opponents of revolutionary Marxism such as the DSP, Socialist Alternative (SAlt) and Solidarity who all wrote about Pacific Brands without a word of criticism of the nationalist protectionism of the union bureaucracy. Taking a slightly different tack, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, in a triumph of historical falsehood and political cowardice, simply disappeared any mention of the trade unions or the blockade from their article on the issue.

The vile nationalist nature of the union tops' campaign was summed up by the national secretary of the textile union, Michele O'Neil. While addressing a Sydney meeting of Pacific Brands workers in May, O'Neil railed, "Why hasn't the Government acted to ensure that contracts for the manufacture of uniforms for Government agencies and the Defence Forces are only given to companies that guarantee ethical, Australian production?" She followed this chauvinist appeal to the supposed "superior ethics" of racist Australian capitalism with more of the same: "It's completely unacceptable that Australian taxpayers pay for our troops to be clothed in uniforms made offshore" (www.tcfua.org.au, 6 May). O'Neil grotesquely seeks to mesh the interests and welfare of the working class to the armed fist of the capitalist state—the military, police, prisons and courts—which serves to defend the private property of the capitalists, with the cops, for example, being used to smash workers picket lines. O'Neil's statement exemplifies, yet again, the nationalist obeisance of the trade-union tops to capitalist class rule.

Last year, in response to the loss of 600 jobs at South Pacific Tyres, the manufacturing workers union in Victoria declared: "The decision demonstrates a worrying trend of companies taking their work offshore to places like China for cheaper unregulated labour" (AMWU website, 26 June 2008). Anti-China protectionism, so prevalent in the manufacturing union, is particularly pernicious because it lines workers up behind the imperialist rulers *against* the Chinese deformed workers state. Against the bureaucrats' attempts to pressure the capitalist rulers to adopt protectionist policies, we Marxists put forward an internationalist class-struggle program to fight job losses at the bosses' expense.

While elements within the union bureaucracy may, from time to time, be moved to some militancy (for example under pressure from their working-class base), they will attempt at every point to chain workers' interests to those of their exploiters. We stand on the important but all-too-rare examples of international working-class solidarity, such as the Waterside Workers Federation bans on loading war materiel bound for the imperialist war against the revolutionary struggle of the Vietnamese workers and peasants in the 1960s.

Trade unions are mass organisations to defend the immediate economic interests of the working class against the capitalists and their state. To consistently carry out that role, they must be independent of the capitalists and their state. Stressing this point, Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky noted in "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay" (1940),

> "The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat."

Against the chauvinism of the union tops, and the ALP to which they are connected, it is necessary to forge a new leadership in the labour movement through class struggle, a leadership that begins with the understanding that the interests of labour and capital are irreconcilably counterposed. The ALP is a bourgeois workers party—thoroughly bourgeois in its outlook and program, but based on the trade unions. A revolutionary workers party must be built by splitting the working-class base away from this pro-capitalist leadership.

For Class-Struggle Defence of Immigrants and Refugees

The bureaucrats' nationalist defence of "Australian jobs" pits workers against their international class brothers and sisters, poisoning the potential for working-class solidarity, and does nothing to save jobs. Blaming overseas workers for the job losses caused by the irrational capitalist system, protectionism also fosters the bosses' divide-and-rule schemes by scapegoating immigrants and fuelling racist attacks on minorities. Against this we declare with Karl Marx: the workers have no country—workers of the world unite!

The union movement must champion asylum rights for all refugees and oppose deportations. It must stand unequivocally on the side of immigrants, demanding full citizenship rights for all. New layers of immigrants bring into the multiracial working class valuable experiences from struggles abroad. A class-struggle fight for immigrant rights would help build a bridge to the struggles of workers from Indonesia to the Philippines who are heavily exploited by Australian

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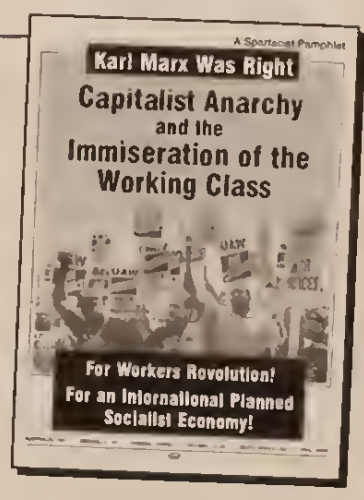

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THE GRANT ADMINISTRATION (1869-1877) AND THE RISE OF U.S. IMPERIALISM

We print below, in slightly edited form, the conclusion of a presentation by Don Cane to a Spartacist League educational in the Bay Area on March 14. Part one of this talk, published in WV *No. 938 (5 June), focused on the consolidation of an American capitalist-imperialist class during the administration of Ulysses S. Grant. What follows is a discussion of the rise of the American labor movement in the decades following the Civil War (1861-65).*

Top: National Archives, Above: Harper's Weekly

Top: Final spike for transcontinental railroad was driven on 10 May 1869. Construction of national railroad system was crucial for U.S. national market. Above: Massacre of Chinese coal miners at Rock Springs, Wyoming, 2 September 1885.

An 1860 pamphlet promoting British investment in American railways made this observation: "The valley of the Mississippi and the basin of the St. Lawrence alone have been truly described as capable of furnishing breadstuffs, coal, iron, and other articles of prime necessity, equal to the consumption of the world." In 1888 an American writer, William H. Harrison Jr., wrote a book called *How to Get Rich in the South* that reported that there was "no country that offers such tempting inducements to the capitalist for profitable investments" (quoted in C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1933* [1951]). Both Northern and British capital flowed into the former Confederate South in the period after the Civil War. This great influx of capital found its way not only into cotton production, but more importantly into mining and railroad construction. Of course, banking interests expanded in the South along with the flow of this capital.

PART TWO

It was the construction of a national railroad system that made possible the creation of a national market. The pre-Civil War Southern railroad system could have been described as branches without a trunk. The year 1880 witnessed the first major consolidation movement among Southern railroads, where once independent railroads coalesced into large systems. This consolidation was accomplished by Northern and British capitalist interests. By 1890 more than half the railroad mileage of the South was in the hands of a dozen large companies, mainly centered in New York City. In the process of this consolidation, Southern railroad gauges were adjusted to Northern standards—a difference of three inches involving 13,000 miles of railroad track and significant bottlenecks. The largest railroad company, the Louisville & Nashville, hired 8,000 men who in one day adjusted 2,000 miles of track and the wheels of 300 locomotives and 10,000 pieces of rolling stock to conform to Northern standards.

V. I. Lenin, in the preface to *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), observed: "Railways are a summation of the basic capitalist industries, coal, iron and steel; a summation and the most striking index of the development of world trade and bourgeois-democratic civilization.... The uneven distribution of the railways, their uneven development—sums up, as it were, modern monopolist capitalism on a world-wide scale." Lenin noted that by 1890 the U.S. had surpassed all of Europe in total railroad mileage. Railroads spread beyond West Europe and North America in the years after 1860; by 1900, Asia, for example, had 34,700 miles of railroad, representing 7.1 percent of the world's total in that year. Even more dramatic was the replacement of wood and sail by iron, steel and steam in ocean shipping. From the national market to the world market this resulted in a dramatic drop in freight rates.

The U.S. capitalist ruling class profited handsomely. But this accumulation of profit did not come without bloody resistance. During the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China, one Boxer poster proclaimed, "The will of heaven is that the telegraph wires be first cut, then the railways torn up, and then shall the foreign devils be decapitated" (quoted in Diana Preston, *The Boxer Rebellion* [1999]). At home, within the U.S., the class struggle was unfolding. This was inevitable at a time when half of the country's vast wealth was owned by 1 percent of the population—the ruling class that ruled with blatant corruption and violence.

Quoting Friedrich Engels, Lenin's *The State and Revolution* (1917) established that "in a democratic republic, Engels continues, 'wealth exercises its power indirectly, but all the more surely,' first, by means of the 'direct corruption of officials' (America); secondly, by means of an 'alliance of the government and the Stock Exchange' (France and America)." Lenin added: "A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell...it establishes its powers so securely, so firmly, that *no* change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it."

In the U.S. South after the Civil War, both the progressive Reconstruction governments and the reactionary post-Reconstruction "Redeemer" governments fit Lenin's description. Both governments handed out millions of acres of public lands free or at nominal cost to railroad and mining interests. Officials of both governments could be bought.

These governments, however, represented the competing interests of different factions of exploiters. The Reconstruction governments were alliances of the Republican Party and the freedmen. But the Republican Party was moving quickly away from its historic roots, the alliance of Northern capitalists and small farmers that had dislodged the slave power from the federal authority through the Civil War. The Republican Party became the party of the big capitalists with a fig leaf of interest in the rights and advancement of black people. Under the Republican Party the rights of free blacks in the North were greatly expanded—the right to vote, access to public schools and the protection of the law. (In pre-Civil War days the movement of free blacks was restricted, and kidnapping and being sold into slavery was a constant threat.) It was under Republican Reconstruction governments that social advances were made in the South. Under these circumstances the Democratic Party recuperated by becoming a "big tent" encompassing all those disgruntled with the policies of the big capitalists and hostile to black rights.

The Compromise of 1877, which formally ended Reconstruction by pulling the last Union troops from the South in exchange for allowing Republican Rutherford B. Hayes to become president in the disputed election of 1876, ceded political control of the South to the Democratic Party (see "Defeat of Reconstruction and the Great Rail Strike of 1877: The Shaping of Racist American Capitalism," *WV* No. 701, 20 November 1998). The Southern Democratic Party, under the banner of "rule of the taxpayer," openly constituted themselves champions of the property owner against the propertyless and allegedly untaxed masses. They abolished large numbers of government offices, departments were cut to skeletal staffs, and some public services were simply dropped. One "Redeemer" governor considered public schools "a luxury...to be paid for like any other luxury, by the people who wish their benefits." Unlike the North, there was no tradition of public schools in the South; it was the Reconstruction governments that brought public schools to the South. The Northern capitalist understood the greater productivity of an educated workforce. The development of the South was to be hindered by high rates of illiteracy. Here are a few examples of how the South's high illiteracy rate hindered development:

• Deposit banking developed slowly among a population that could not read or write checks;

Culver

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

Left: State militia fires on striking rail workers in Baltimore during Great Rail Strike of 1877. Right: Haymarket martyrs framed up and hanged in Chicago, 1887, for leading struggle for eight-hour day.

• The normal business of lawyers and bankers requiring the use of documentation was hindered among the population that could not read or prepare these documents;

• Modern agriculture depended upon many things, including the learning of agricultural colleges; pamphlets and books were of no use among a population that could not read.

The Republican Reconstruction governments and the Democratic "Redeemer" governments were both bourgeois governments, but their particular policies had concrete implications for the historic development of this country and its various regions.

The Emergence of the Working Class

In "Socialist Agitation Among Farmers in America" (1902), German Social Democratic leader Karl Kautsky made this observation:

> "Even when a permanent proletariat arose, in which born Americans began to take their places by the side of foreign immigrants and Negroes, the Anglo-Saxons still remained 'practical politicians.' They did, indeed, begin to understand that they must go into politics for themselves, but like true practical politicians, they demanded that it should be a shortsighted policy which should take heed only of the moment and regard it more practical to run after a bourgeois swindler who promises real successes for tomorrow, instead of standing by a party of their own class which is honest enough to confess that it has nothing but struggles and sacrifices in store for the next future, and which declares it to be foolish to expect to reap immediately after sowing.
>
> "If at any time Anglo-American workingmen had come to the conclusion that they must keep clear of the old capitalist parties, then this ill-starred 'practical' sense would mislead them into founding a party on some single issue, which was supposed to cure at once all evils, free silver, single tax, or the like. But when this agitation did not bring any immediate success, then the masses soon tired of it, and the movement which had grown up over night collapsed quickly. Only the workingmen of German origin kept a Socialist movement alive among their countrymen. However, such a movement of immigrants could never hope to become a serious political factor. And as this emigration from Germany decreased considerably...and as the Germans in America soon became anglicized, this German Socialist propaganda not only made no progress, but actually fell off after a certain time."

These "single issues" to "cure at once all evils" were Greenbackism, free silver, bimetalism and the single tax, all of which reflected the pressure of the farm on the worker. I am not an economist so I will give you what I understand to be the broad strokes of these single issues. It was a question of cheap money versus the gold standard. After the Civil War, the federal government was $1.5 billion in debt; this was mostly held in war bonds. These war bonds when due were payable in gold dollars. To conduct the Civil War the federal government for the first time began printing paper money. What Grant meant by "balancing the budget" was reducing the amount of paper money in circulation.

The U.S., however, was actually on two standards—gold and silver. The ruling class favored the European gold standard and felt the necessity to adopt this standard as the one-and-only. The American farmer had already been brought into the capitalist world market where prices were established. It was to the advantage of the farmer to pay his debts with cheap currency—paper and silver. While the European and U.S. ruling classes conducted their business on the gold standard, much of the colonial world was on a silver standard. This raised the costs of maintaining military forces abroad. At home and abroad the U.S. sought to eliminate the use of the silver standard.

At the same time, the American farmer and worker did have one common enemy, the railroads. The privately owned railroad was a powerful means of exploiting the farmer by the capitalist, using higher freight costs. The same railroad owners stood opposed to the railroad workers and the iron workers, the two most important branches of labor. But a labor-farmer alliance was not tenable given the campaign for the eight-hour day, which farmers necessarily opposed.

The Knights of Labor

In 1869, a secret labor organization called the "Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor" was founded by a handful of garment cutters in Philadelphia. The founding leader of the Knights of Labor was Uriah Stephens, a former abolitionist and Lincoln supporter. Early in the Civil War Stephens was described as "one of the first and foremost to urge upon the Lincoln administration the securing of the right to the soil for the liberated freedman of the south" (quoted in Sidney H. Kessler, "The Organization of Negroes in the Knights of Labor," *The Journal of Negro History* [July 1952]). He later left the Republican Party when it became clearly dominated by big capitalists.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper

New York Public Library

Left: Terence Powderly (center), leader of Knights of Labor, being introduced by Frank Farrell, a black delegate at Knights of Labor's tenth annual convention in Richmond, Virginia, 1886. Above: Henry George, leader of United Labor Party.

The organization Stephens helped to found developed into the first real national trade union and a genuine product of the American workers, encompassing a broad swath of the American working class. The Knights of Labor stood on a modest program. In their own words, they meant "no antagonism to capital." They sought to "create a healthy public opinion on the subject of labor" and aimed to achieve "a full just share of the values or capital it [labor] has created." The bourgeois press hysterically denounced the Knights of Labor as a "dangerous underground political organization." All trade unions were secret organizations by necessity. When the Knights of Labor ended their status as a secret trade union in 1881, their membership experienced steady growth. In 1885 the Knights of Labor won a strike against Jay Gould's Southwest Railway conglomerate. After this victory the Knights of Labor membership mushroomed.

The motto of the Knights of Labor was "an injury to one is the concern of all." This is the origin of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) slogan, "An injury to one is an injury to all." The Knights of Labor drew into their ranks tens of thousands of workers who had never been organized before—men and women, black and white, foreign-born and native-born. The Knights of Labor was not organized on an *industrial* but on a *geographical* basis, in the form of assemblies. Each assembly was independently chartered and given a number. All assembly halls featured a reading room with a recommended list of readings. Organizers were appointed by the Grand Master Workman, Terence Powderly, who had superseded the founding leadership by the 1880s.

The Knights of Labor established roots in the South, recruiting blacks and whites alike, skilled labor and unskilled labor. Local assemblies were sometimes integrated and other times segregated, by no particular plan. Some assemblies in the South began as all-black and gradually recruited white members. The biggest demand of the black workers in the Knights of Labor was for black organizers. As one letter writer wrote, "Down in this country the wt. [white] people have set a decoy and fooled the colored people so much it is simply impossible for a wt. organizer to orgze them" (*The Journal of Negro History* [January 1968]). Nonetheless, Powderly appointed very few black organizers. In spite of this, blacks continued to join the Knights of Labor even after it entered a period of decline.

The Knights of Labor, like other labor organizations in the decades after the Civil War, practiced the reactionary exclusion of Chinese workers. In spite of this ban there were attempts to organize Chinese assemblies of the Knights of Labor in New York and Philadelphia. This pitted the General Executive Board, which refused to grant charters to these assemblies, against local organizers (among whom blacks were represented). Anti-Chinese bigotry was centered in California, where Chinese immigrants made up some 25 percent of the wage workers in the early 1870s. This reactionary ban was a litmus test of labor leadership. It was the IWW that later brought industrial unionism to the American working class, welcoming into its ranks all workers regardless of race.

Powderly, an Irish nationalist, was rumored to have considered petitioning the Pope for his blessing. This was his answer to the reign of terror that fell upon the labor movement after the Haymarket bombing in Chicago in 1886, when working-class leaders, mainly anarchists, were framed up and sentenced to die. Of course, such an effort to gain the blessing of the church aroused distrust among the Protestant members—many of the Knights of Labor leadership were Irish and the pressure of the Catholic church was felt. Powderly was an anti-communist who believed the anarchists were guilty in the Haymarket bombing. But given the enormous support for the Haymarket men among the Knights of Labor workers, it was impossible to openly denounce the anarchists. Powderly fought to keep politics out of the Knights of Labor. But this was difficult as all political currents within the workers movement found expression within the organization.

Henry George was the leader of the United Labor Party and author of a popular book titled *Progress and Poverty* (1879), a central tenet of which was the "single tax." The single tax was a tax on land values, to replace all other taxes. As a candidate for New York City mayor in 1886, George outpolled Republican Teddy Roosevelt and likely the Democratic candidate as well. But by the tried-and-true American method of election fraud, he was denied his victory.

Henry George also joined the Knights of Labor. This was the beginning of an uneasy alliance between George and Powderly. Both leaders were anti-communists and believed that the Haymarket martyrs were guilty. But George favored clemency for the convicted Haymarket men, while Powderly opposed even this call. Haymarket martyr Albert Parsons was expelled from the Knights of Labor, and the Knights of Labor General Executive Board refused to endorse the first May Day general strike. This boycott was successful, except in Chicago where the Knights of Labor ranks joined the strike. The differences between George and Powderly were strictly within the bounds of capitalist politics—protectionism (Powderly) or free trade (George). The fortunes of the United Labor Party began to wane and George reversed himself, making a public statement asserting that the violence each Haymarket man had espoused made him guilty of conspiracy under Illinois law. He implied that even if none of them had thrown the bomb, their fates were the logical outcome of their dangerous ideals. In 1887, all United Labor Party members holding dual membership in the Socialist Labor Party (SLP) were expelled.

The SLP was the organization of the German socialists in the U.S. to whom both Kautsky and Engels had addressed their remarks. A section of the Socialist Labor Party was to go on to play an important role in the founding of both the American Socialist Party and the IWW later on. Throughout the period that we are discussing the SLP fought to carry out a revolutionary perspective. They stood out as a principled party among labor opportunists of all sorts.

Populism

By 1890 two organizations that stood outside the labor movement claimed over three million members: the National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union, based in the South and West, and the Farmers' Alliance, based in the North. In 1892 the two organizations held a joint convention, nominated a candidate for president, and adopted the name of "People's Party," from which they became known as Populists. They declared that "the newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled; public opinion silenced, business prostrate; our homes covered with mortgages; and the land concentrating in the hands of capitalists.... The fruits of the toil of millions are boldly stolen to build up colossal fortunes for a few."

Having delivered this sweeping indictment, the Populists put forward their remedies: the free coinage of silver, a graduated income tax, postal savings banks and government ownership of railways and telegraphs. At the same time, they called for the popular election of Senators—who at that time were appointed by state legislatures—but not the president, who to this day is still elected by the Electoral College. They also condemned the use of federal troops

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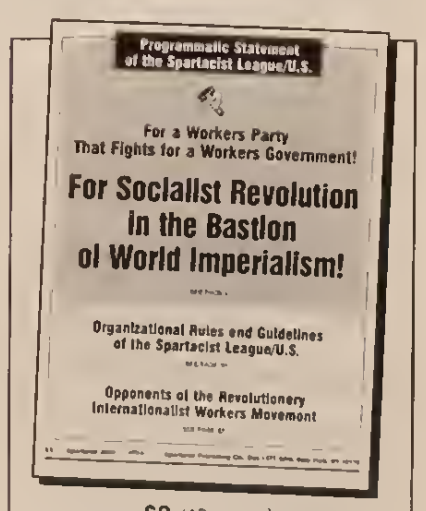

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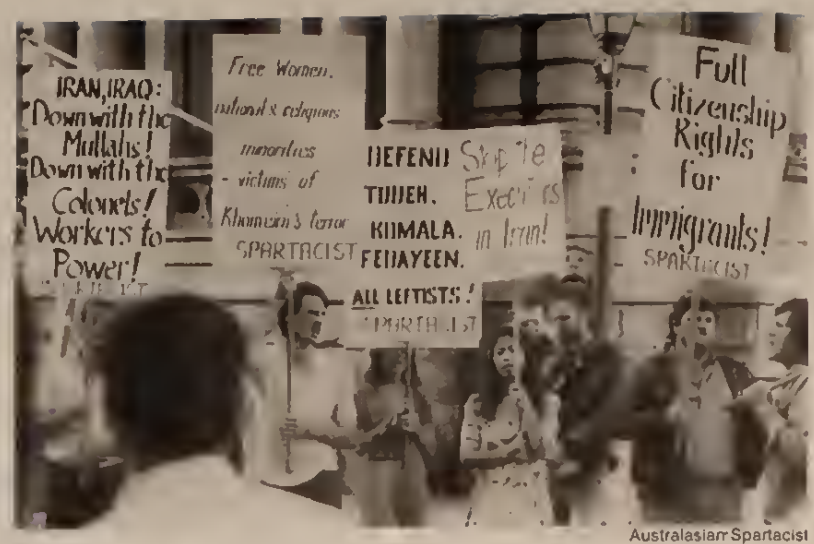
Kavah Golestan

Anti-Shah demonstrators raise huge portrait of Khomeini, 1979. *WV* called for workers revolution in Iran, opposing both bloody Shah and Islamic reaction.



Australasian Spartacist

Sydney, Australia: Spartacists protest mass executions carried out by bloody Khomeini dictatorship, January 1989.

Iran...

(continued from page 1)

butchers! For a socialist federation of the Near East!

Reformist Left Bowed to Mullahs

All sides in the tumult shaking Iran today hark back to the 1979 overthrow of the country's despised autocrat, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, as a model for their political activity. At that time, the convulsive opposition to the monarchy included powerful workers strikes in the oil fields and throughout the country; Iran could have become the cockpit of proletarian revolution in the Near East. However, the mass mobilizations were channeled into a reactionary crusade for an "Islamic Republic," with virtually the entire left in Iran and internationally cheering on the mullah-dominated opposition led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Uniquely on the left, we called for the proletariat to struggle independently of and against the Islamic hierarchy, to sweep away the Peacock Throne and establish a workers and peasants government.

The establishment of a Shi'ite theocracy following the overthrow of the Shah resulted in the savage repression of Kurds and other minorities; the execution of strikers, homosexuals, adulterers and others accused of "crimes against God"; the stoning of unveiled women, the slaughter of leftists and the suppression of all opposition parties and press. As we wrote in our International Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

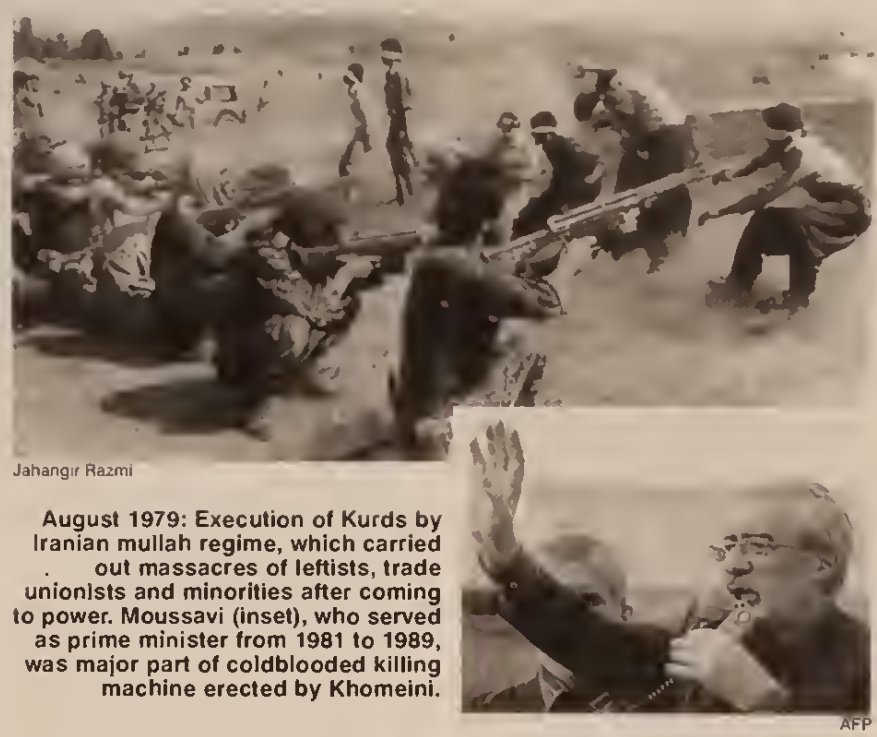
> "The 1979 'Iranian Revolution' opened up a period of ascendant political Islam in the historically Muslim world, a development which contributed to and was powerfully reinforced by the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union. Khomeini's seizure and consolidation of power in Iran was a defeat akin to Hitler's crushing of the German proletariat in 1933, albeit on a narrower, regional scale. The international Spartacist tendency's slogan 'Down with the Shah! No support to the mullahs!' and our focus on the woman question ('No to the veil!') stood in sharp opposition to the rest of the left's capitulation to mullah-led reaction."

Today, much of the reformist left repeats the treacherous policies of 30 years ago by lining up behind one or another wing of the ruling clergy in Iran. The remnants of Tudeh, the pro-Moscow Communist party that supported Khomeini and then was crushed by him, called for a vote to "reformist candidates," including Moussavi, whose hands are covered with the blood of their own comrades (*Tudeh News*, June 2009). Meanwhile, the fake Trotskyists of the Iranian Revolutionary Marxists' Tendency (IRMT), associated with the International Marxist Tendency (IMT) led by Alan Woods, dimly appealed in a June 16 open letter to Moussavi (www.Marxist.com): "You must either side with the people who voted for you or with the *vali-e faghih* [Supreme Leader] (and the repressive apparatus of the state). Being at the service of the people would mean that you should cut your links with the whole state apparatus." The IRMT describes itself as descended from the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS), which also supported Khomeini's rise to power.

In the U.S., some left groups have sided with the pro-Ahmadinejad wing of the clerics against the protests, claiming that in this way they are opposing U.S. imperialism. A June 24 article posted on the Workers World Party (WWP) Web site declared, "Revolutionary socialists or communists sharply differentiate themselves from Ahmadinejad on many points. In the current conflict, however, his side is more anti-imperialist." After three decades of the mullahs' bloody rule, WWP still proclaims: "The Iranian people have benefitted enormously from their revolution and cannot easily be turned back" (*Workers World*, 17 June). Likewise, a June 22 article (pslweb.org) by the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), a split-off from WWP, denounced the protests: "U.S. and British imperialism hope that a victory of this movement would result in the counter-revolutionary overthrow of the anti-colonial 1979 revolution."

Key to the future of Iran is the proletariat, the only class with the social power and objective interest to lead radicalized youth, women and oppressed nationalities behind it in an assault on the capitalist system itself. While individual workers have no doubt participated in the protest demonstrations, there is no sign as yet that any section of the powerful Iranian proletariat has intervened to assert its *independent* class interests against the Islamic regime. Two statements by workers groups in Iran have been widely posted on the Internet. One, signed by "Laborers of Iran Khodro" (the largest automotive company in the Near East) called for a 30-minute protest strike in "solidarity with the movement of the people of Iran." And in a statement by the Vahed Syndicate, representing Tehran bus workers, the union similarly expressed support for "the movement of Iranian people to build a free and independent civil society."

The fundamental question facing the Iranian proletariat today is the need to build a Marxist workers party that fights for the class independence of the proletariat—from the clerics, the nationalists and the pro-imperialist elements—and for working-class rule. A key difference between the situation today and that of 1979 is that, before the victory of the "Islamic revolution," significant sections of the proletariat were led by leftist parties, centrally Tudeh. That generation of left-wing worker cadres was wiped out by the very regime that the leaders of Tudeh and other left parties helped bring to power.



Jahangir Razmi

August 1979: Execution of Kurds by Iranian mullah regime, which carried out massacres of leftists, trade unionists and minorities after coming to power. Moussavi (inset), who served as prime minister from 1981 to 1989, was major part of coldblooded killing machine erected by Khomeini.

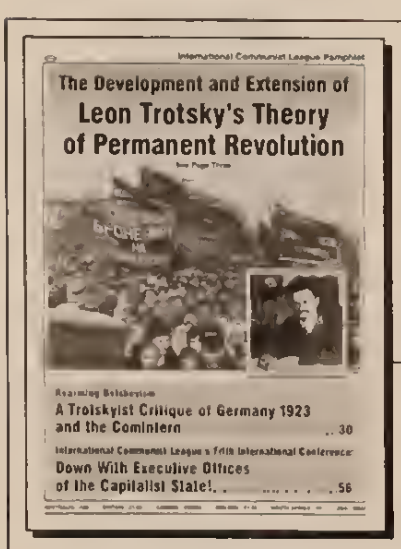
AFP

For Permanent Revolution!

In 1978-79, the left in Iran and internationally supported the Khomeini-led forces of clerical reaction by claiming that they were leading an "anti-imperialist" revolution. The International Socialist Organization headlined an article: "The Form—Religious, The Spirit—Revolution" (*Socialist Worker*, January 1979). The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the U.S. proclaimed "Victory in Iran: Iranian Masses Show the Way for Workers Around the World" (*Militant*, 23 February 1979). Brian Grogan, a leader of the British group of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) of the late Ernest Mandel, even boasted that he had joined in chants of "Allah Akbar" during demonstrations in Tehran. The HKS, affiliated with the USec, went so far as to run in 1979 for election to the mullahs' Assembly of Experts—before joining the ranks of the mullahs' victims.

While we rushed to the defense of the HKS and other leftists victimized by the mullah regime, the American SWP and the USec, blinded by their grotesque opportunism, for months minimized the danger to their own imprisoned comrades. As we wrote in "SWP/USec Criminal Tailism: History Takes Its Vengeance" (*WV* No. 239, 14 September 1979): "USec, SWP, HKS—Ernest Mandel, Jack Barnes and the rest: you have committed a crime, for which you will be held responsible before the court of history. You must live with it because your own comrades may die for it."

The so-called "Islamic revolution" of 1979 represented a negative confirmation of Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky's theory and program of permanent revolution. In the epoch of imperialism, all wings of the bourgeoisie in countries of belated capitalist development like Iran are too dependent on their ties to the imperialists and too fearful of independent working-class action to play any



International Communist League pamphlet comprising three articles from ICL press:

- **The Development and Extension of Leon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution**
- **A Trotskyist Critique of Germany 1923 and the Comintern**
- **Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!**

These articles together constitute an introduction to the historically founded principles and program of Trotskyism (i.e., genuine Marxism).

$2 (56 pages)

Spartacist No. 33, Spring 1982
From Mossadeq's National Front to Khomeini's Reaction
Iran and Permanent Revolution
(Also available in Farsi)

$.50 (24 pages)

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

progressive rnle. They are incapable of solving the bourgeois-democratic tasks associated with the great European revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries, such as agrarian revolution, national independence, democratic freedoms and women's rights.

The expericnce of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolutinn showed that it is only the proletariat, leading the peasant and urban plebeian masses, which can liherate the societies of countries of belated capitalist development. In the Near East, only the proletariat can breik the chains of reactionary traditionalism and imperialist subjugation. As Trotsky declared in 1928: "The further East we go, the lower and viler hecomes the bourgeoisie, the greater are the tasks that fall upon the proletariat" (*The Third International After Lenin*). In seizing state power and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat, the workers of the backward countries will be compelled to institute socialist measures, such as the expropriation of the means of production and the establishment of a planned economy. However, these revolutions will survive and flourish only if they are extended to the advanced capitalist countries of the West and Japan.

Rejecting this Marxist perspective, Tudeh, following in the footsteps of the Stalinized Communist International (Comintern), insisted that because of Iran's economic and historical hackwardness, the proletariat could not take power in its own name. Instead, they argued that there must be a "two-stage revolution," the first stage of which would be led by the "progressive" or "anti-imperialist" bourgeoisie and limited to solving democratic capitalist tasks. Socialist revolution, they claimed, would come in the distant, unspecified future. As always, the second, proletarian, stage of the revolution never came.

Tudeh and the rest of the Iranian left invested the Islamic clergy with "anti-imperialist" credentials, blinding their working-class base to the grave dangers they faced in the event of a mullah victory and setting the workers up for brutal suppression. In fact, in the early years of the mullah regime, Tudeh cadre went so far as to fight shoulder to shoulder with the murderous pasdaran and the fascistic hezbollahi thugs in killing other Iranian leftists. And during the Iran-Iraq War, which was reactionary on both sides, the Tudeh party told its members to report to their mosques (!) for military duty under the pasdaran.

In promoting the concept of "two-stage revolution," Stalin and his cronies could at least claim that they were giving support to modernizing bourgeois forces. Fnr example, during the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, the Chinese Communist Party was directed by Stalin and his henchmen to subordinate itself to the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang led by Chiang Kai-shek. The Stalinists argued that this step toward consummating the supposed "first stage" of the Chinese Revolution was justified by the fact that Chiang opposed the decaying Manchu Dynasty and decried the binding of women's feet. Nevertheless, the result of this Stalinist betrayal was the slaughter of tens of thousands of Communists and militant workers who were disarmed by Chiang in the Shanghai massacre of April 1927.

What claim to modernism could the retrograde caste of mullahs in Iran possibly have had? The reactionary character of the Islamic opposition was manifest from the outset, above all by its position on the woman question. As we warned in "Down With the Shah! Down With the Mullahs!" (*WV* No. 219, 17 November 1978):

> "The Muslims call for an *Islamic* republic. They support the Constitution of 1906 and particularly the added 1907 clause which explicitly guarantees clerical veto power over all legislation. The mullahs' opposition to the shah is a reactionary one, no matter how it plays on the crimes of the shah's dictatorship. The fanatical hatred of social advances since the time of the prophet Muhammed (the seventh century A.D.!) has its parallels in the military-based regimes of Pakistan or Libya and in the region-wide revival of religious obscurantism and its vicious oppression of women."

Amnesty International

Iranian woman being prepared for execution by stoning, 2004. Fake leftists hailed and continue to hail Islamic regime that carries out such barbaric practices as "revolutionary."

The Islamic Republic has been hell for women. After coming to power, Khomeini reimposed the *hijab* for women in public. Those who flouted the edict were subjected to 74 lashes or a year's imprisonment. Meanwhile, a man's testimony was deemed worth twice that of a woman. Lashings and amputations were applied by the courts, and women convicted of adultery could be subject to stoning. Child marriage was re-introduced, while laws encouraged polygamy and prevented women from leaving abusive husbands. The husband's right of unilateral divorce was reinstated.

Nevertheless, modern practices have seeped into Iran. While child marriage was reintroduced, the average age of first marriages for women has continued to rise from about 19 before 1979 to 24 today. According to the *New York Review of Books* (2 July), literacy rates exceed 95 percent for both sexes. Today, a majority of college students are women. But despite these trends, women constitute only 15 percent of the formal-sector paid labor force. The 2006 Iranian census revealed that only 3.5 million Iranian women were salaried workers, compared with 23.5 million men.

During a wave of protests in Iran six years ago, we laid out our perspective for women's liberation through socialist revolution:

> "In the countries of the East, the question of women's oppression is one of the most powerful motor forces of socialist revolution. Indeed, when the Bolsheviks arrived in Central Asia in the years following the October Revolution, it was among women that they found the main point of support for their program and won their key cadres. The same holds true for Iran. A Leninist-Trotskyist party, championing women's rights against the age-old stranglehold of religion and the family, will find its most loyal and courageous fighters among women."
>
> —"For Workers Revolution in Iran!" *WV* No. 807 (1 August 2003)

WCPI: Apologists for "Democratic" Imperialism

The Worker-communist Party of Iran (WCPI) has denounced both the Ahmadinejad and Moussavi wings of the clerical regime. However, in its opposition to the Islamic Republic, the WCPI has had a long history of appealing to the imperialist powers—far greater enemies of the world's oppressed than the ayatollahs of impoverished neocolonial Iran—as potential allies. Thus a WCPI representative wrote to the London *Evening Standard* (17 June) regarding the protests in Iran: "Now is the time for people in the west to exert pressure on western governments to politically isolate the regime rather than excuse and legitimise it." A June 22 Web posting boasts that WCPI leader Hamid Taqvaee "wrote to heads of states and the UN Secretary General on behalf of the people of Iran calling on governments 'to immediately break all political ties with the Islamic Repuhlic of Iran, shut down its embassies and consulates and ensure its expulsion from the United Nations and other international institutions'."

The reactionary nature of the WCPI's appeals to "democratic" imperialism has actually played out in Iraq. In 2003 the WCPI's then-sister organization in Iraq *supported the imperialist occupation of that country*, calling only to replace the U.S./British occupiers with "the intervention of the United Nations." This was after a UN embargo of Iraq, imposed following the 1991 Gulf War, had resulted in the deaths of some one and a half million people.

At the same time, the WCPI stands out among Iranian left groups for prominently raising the key issue of women's rights and for opposing the veil. Yet following the Soviet Union's intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 against a CIA-backed Islamic fundamentalist insurgency, the WCPI viewed the Red Army as just as reactionary as the *mujahedin* holy warriors. They joined most of the left in refusing to support the Soviet intervention. This was justified by the WCPI's false claim that the Soviet Union became "state capitalist" hy the mid 1920s.

We Trotskyists unconditionally defended the Soviet degenerated workers state against internal counterrevolution and imperialist attack, while calling for proletarian political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. We said "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called for extending the social gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples. While warning that the Kremlin bureaucracy was capable of selling out to the imperialists, we pninted out that the Red Army intervention was objectively in defense of the Soviet Union and a blow against the Islamic fundamentalists who threatened to return women to virtual slavery. The Kremlin's withdrawal from Afghanistan led to the victory of the *mujahedin*, with today's hideous consequences for Afghan women, and gave a giant impulse to the forces of capitalist restoration that triumphed in the Soviet Union.

Iran Needs Workers Revolution!

Iran today is a cauldron of contradictions and deepening tensions waiting to erupt. A new generation has grown up—as much as 70 percent of the population is under 30 years of age—that did not experience the 1979 "Islamic revolution" or the savage war with Iraq in the 1980s. These largely well-educated young people, their vision broadened by access to the Internet and other media, are smothered by the medieval strictures imposed by the clerical regime. Meanwhile, Iran remains a prison house of peoples in which Azeris, Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis and others oppressed by the Persian-chauvinist regime constitute nearly half the population.

The current protests have taken place in the midst of a severe economic downturn, made worse by the world financial crisis. Overwhelmingly dependent on oil, Iran's foreign exchange receipts plummeted as the price of oil fell from a high of about $140 a barrel to around $70 today. At the same time, the inflation rate is about 24 percent and official unemployment stands at 17 percent. More than 35 percent of the population under the age of 30 is experiencing long-term unemployment.

The only road to genuine social and economic modernization, to liberating Iran from imperialist subjugation, to freeing Iranian women from enslavement, to winning the right of national self-determination for the Kurds and the myriad other oppressed nationalities, lies in the smashing of capitalist class rule in Iran. The Iranian masses urgently need a working-class revolutionary party, capable of leading the struggle against the reactionary clerical regime. To forge such a party, leftist militants in Iran must understand the roots of the betrayals by those misleaders who in 1979 helped prepare a historic defeat by embracing the forces of Islamic reaction as a "progressive" altemative to the Shah.■

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(continued from page 5)

imperialism. The fight to organise the unorganised, combined with the struggle for jobs for all at equal pay for equal work—including for women, youth and minorities—would strengthen the organised labour movement and help to unify the working class in struggle against the bosses' attacks. A class-struggle leadership in the unions would fight to mobilise the social power of the working class, with its strategic immigrant component, in a broad struggle against the racist exploitative capitalist system.

This perspective is counterposed to that of the reformist opportunists who seek to pressure the ALP or bourgeois parties like the Greens to act in the interests of the workers and oppressed. A case in point is the Cliffite Solidarity group. Crawling to the ALP, they wrote in the April issue of their paper, "The Rudd government can continue to let the Liberals whip up hysteria, or it can go on the front foot. That means ditching the Liberals' rhetoric of 'border protection' and 'people smuggling' and implementing a genuinely humanitarian policy that says 'refugees are welcome'." What planet do these people live on? It was the federal Keating ALP government that introduced mandatory detention of refugees in the early 1990s and Rudd's Labor government aggressively enforces this policy today. Indeed "White Australian" racism has historically been a principal pillar of the ALP. While the White Australia policy has been formally abolished, Australian Laborism continues to identify with the xenophobic fears of its own ruling class.

Meanwhile, posturing as militant anti-racists, SAlt scream "Rudd's betrayal of refugees" while lamenting that the Greens "have conspicuously avoided explicit calls for mandatory detention to be scrapped" (*Socialist Alternative*, May 2009). SAlt's hollow outrage at Rudd notwithstanding, the ALP are in fact doing exactly what they promised at the last federal elections. At that time SAlt led the charge in calling for a vote to the capitalist Greens in order to pressure the Labor Party. This truly was an act of class *betrayal*. In contrast, we Marxists told the truth about the objective interests of the working class. Declaring the elections a bipartisan war on the working class and oppressed we demanded, "No vote to Labor or bourgeois Greens!" (see *Australasian Spartacist* No. 200, Summer 2007/2008).

We Need a Multiracial Revolutionary Workers Party

The economic crisis currently immiserating workers and the oppressed exemplifies the anarchy and decay that besets capitalist production in general, and for which there are no simple trade-union solutions. The key contradiction of capitalism was identified by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: under capitalism production is socialised, that is, concentrated and organised in vast corporations, but the means of production—and the appropriated socially produced wealth—remain the private property of a tiny, rich capitalist class.

In their drive to expand profits, the capitalist rulers have looted the wealth of this country and sabotaged its vital infrastructure. They squander the economic surplus they appropriate through the exploitation of labour on speculative binges, which inevitably end in the idling and destruction of productive forces. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the capitalist owners and the swindles of the banks, we demand the bosses open their books to all members of society. As the bosses continue to throw hundreds of thousands into the ranks of the unemployed, the fight for jobs becomes equivalent to the fight against the devastation of the working class as a whole. What is necessary is a massive program of public works, with workers paid at union wages, to rebuild the infrastructure of this decaying capitalist system, to tear down and replace the crumbling public schools, hospitals, roads and rail systems. Against layoffs we demand jobs for all by calling for a shorter work week at no loss in pay to spread the work around.

Angela Wylie

Melbourne, May 31: Indian students protest ongoing violent racist attacks. Labor government's xenophobia fuels racist reaction on streets. Multiracial working class must champion rights of all immigrants.

We call for free, decent public transport and education, and free 24-hour quality health care and childcare; for fully paid retraining programs and an increase in unemployment benefits equivalent to a living wage. Such demands, the elements of which were laid out in Trotsky's Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, will not be granted by the profit-gouging capitalist rulers. Capitalist decay and the catastrophe of mass unemployment, which threatens the disintegration of the working class, can only be effectively fought by a workers movement led by those committed to the liquidation of capitalist wage slavery through socialist revolution.

Years of betrayal by the union misleaders have led to a haemorrhaging from the unions and atomisation of the working class. Internationally the proletariat continues to suffer the effects of the 1991-92 capitalist counterrevolutions in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This historic defeat for the world's working class has resulted in a regression of political consciousness which, albeit uneven, means that few workers today identify their struggles with the need for socialism. However, as was seen in the recent mass picket at Melbourne's Westgate Bridge against the scab-herding union busting of the John Holland company, there is a felt anger and willingness to fight amongst many workers. The capitalist mode of production, which creates the very conditions which grind down the working class and set them one against the other in the fight to survive, also propels the working class to do battle against its exploiters. As long as capitalism exists it will generate the conditions for potential class-struggle opposition to capitalist rule.

Today the working class is at an historically difficult pass. The anger of workers and the poor must be organised around a revolutionary Marxist program and directed against the capitalist class as a whole, not channelled into chauvinist belly-crawling before the ALP. History has repeatedly shown that "unity" with the capitalist rulers or their social-democratic political agents in the workers movement is the road to defeat. It is necessary to break with the politics of Laborism! Workers need a political party that represents their interests against the capitalist class. Integral to the building of this Leninist vanguard party will be forging an internationalist class-struggle leadership within the unions.

The Spartacist League of Australia, as part of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is committed to building such a revolutionary Marxist party to lead the proletariat, at the head of all the oppressed, in sweeping away the entire capitalist system of wage slavery, repression and war. The only way to allow for the development of the productive forces, assuring a society of abundance, is by ripping them out of the hands of the capitalist class through socialist revolution and the establishment of an international planned economy. If humanity is to have a future, those who labour must rule. For a workers republic of Australia, part of a socialist Asia!■

Mohamed...

(continued from page 3)

whose loyalty to "democratic" British imperialism means they have signed on to the government's witch hunt and uttered hardly a word, much less led any class struggle, against the gutting of hard won rights going back to the English Civil War.

Defence of minorities against grinding racist oppression must go forward with and as part of the struggles of the organised working class, or both struggles lose ground. And Muslims and other minorities are not just helpless victims, they are an integral part of the working class. The power of the multiethnic proletariat was clear in the August 2005 strike which paralysed Heathrow Airport when British Airways ground crews struck in defence of sacked catering workers, mainly Sikh women. But the TGWU leadership rode to the rescue of the bosses and called off the wildcat strike in deference to the anti-union laws, and the catering workers remained sacked.

The key to unchaining the power of the working class is the forging of a multiethnic revolutionary workers party built through hard political combat against Labourism—a party whose purpose is to take the class forward to power through socialist revolution. Revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist order worldwide alone can lay the material basis for ending torture, racist oppression, exploitation and war. *Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with the racist "war on terror"!*■

SF8...

(continued from page 2)

men to Young's killing. The "discovery" of a shotgun alleged to be the "missing murder weapon" was found not to match any weapons evidence in the case. Similarly, DNA swabs taken from the defendants in June 2006 did not match any evidence from the crime scene. The prosecution has refused to release fingerprint evidence that exonerates all of these men. The judge ruled against releasing FBI wiretap surveillance of Black Panther phone lines based on an FBI "taint team" affidavit asserting that there had been no wiretap surveillance of the SF8. One need only recall the case of another former Panther, Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) who spent 27 years behind bars for a murder that the FBI and California state officials knew he did not commit. The FBI claimed that it had "lost" wiretaps proving that Geronimo was at an Oakland Panther meeting, 400 miles away from L.A. where and when the murder was committed. Geronimo was released from prison in 1997 when an Orange County Superior Court Judge ruled that he had been denied a fair trial because the prosecution had withheld vital evidence from the defense.

The FBI's murderous COINTELPRO program took the lives of 38 Panthers. Those they couldn't kill were framed up and thrown in jail, including Mumia Abu-Jamal who remains on death row today on fabricated charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. Mumia's death sentence was secured by the prosecutor's lying argument that his membership in the Panthers as a teenager "proved" that he had been planning to kill a cop. The prosecution of the SF8 is a continuation of the same COINTELPRO-style frame-up campaign. Together with other fighters against racist injustice, labor unions and federations like the S.F. Labor Council and others, the Partisan Defense Committee demands: Drop the charges *now*!■

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The Rise of U.S. Imperialism...

(continued from page 7)

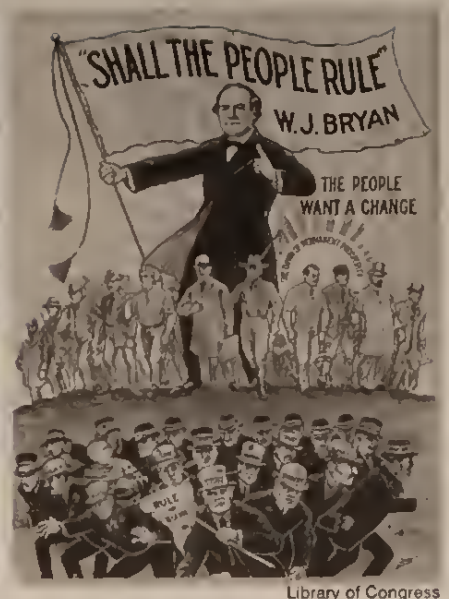
in labor disputes. On this platform, the Populists polled over a million votes in the 1892 elections, captured 22 presidential electors and sent a powerful delegation to Congress.

In 1893 the American capitalist economy was shaken by a periodic crisis: banks and businesses went into bankruptcy; factory production came to a halt; the unemployed searched for work that did not exist; and the prices of farm products (including cotton) fell disastrously. These conditions sent Populism on the march, with the working class being pulled behind the petty bourgeoisie.

Shaken by economic fluctuations, workers and farmers protested the economic inequalities of the capitalist order, and they found common ground in this multiclass populist movement. They protested the domination and outright corruption of the big financial and industrial interests that controlled the economy and the party machines of both Republicans and Democrats. Looking back at an America that used to be, they protested the inevitable centralization of the economy and state power in the hands of the capitalists. They voiced a theme that we still hear today: share the wealth more fairly and improve the living standards of the masses. They sought to remove the government from the hands of the big capitalists and put it in the hands of the people. They sought to stop imperialist war and keep the nation at peace. What they won fell well short of these objectives. But they did eventually win some reforms: recall of elected officials, direct election of U.S. Senators, the graduated income tax, gains in social welfare, prison reform, child labor legislation and many of the public commissions that regulate capitalist business practices.

The support for the People's Party crossed not only the class line but also the race line. The People's Party was crushed by heavy repression that included the utilization of vicious anti-black racism. But what finally ended and destroyed the People's Party as a national party was the co-optation of its forces into the Democratic Party. Democrat William Jennings Bryan voiced their sentiments in his "Cross of Gold" speech at the Democratic Convention in 1896, invoking the image of Christ on the cross: "You shall not press upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns. You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold." He declared that their cause "was as holy as the cause of liberty—the cause of humanity." He exclaimed that the contest was between the idle holders of capital and the toiling millions. Then he named those for whom he claimed to speak: the wage-earner, the country lawyer, the small merchant, the farmer and the miner.

W. F. Farrow



Library of Congress

Left: Members of Populist Party in Kansas legislature, February 1893. Right: Democratic leader William Jennings Bryan, pictured in 1908 campaign poster, played key role in drawing Populist movement into Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party's appeal to labor voiced by Bryan in his "crown of thorns" speech was reinforced in its radical-sounding platform in 1896. "As labor creates the wealth of the country," ran one plank, "we demand the passage of such laws as may be necessary to protect it in all its rights." Referring to the 1894 Pullman strike, led by railway workers union leader Eugene Debs, the platform denounced "arbitrary interference by federal authorities in local affairs as a violation of the Constitution of the United States and a crime against free institutions." A special objection was lodged against "government by injunction as a new and highly dangerous form of oppression by which federal judges, in contempt of the laws of states and rights of citizens, become at once legislators, judges, and executioners." The remedy advanced was a federal law assuring trial by jury in all cases of contempt in labor disputes.

Early American Communist leader and founding Trotskyist James P. Cannon made the following observations regarding the founding of the American Socialist Party, a party that in part arose out of the People's Party. In an article in *International Socialist Review* (Winter 1960), "American Radicalism: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Cannon wrote, "The distinctive factor which made possible the development of this new socialist movement at that time was the turn of a number of influential individuals and groups away from the policy of class collaboration in politics to the policy of independent socialist action." Eugene Debs and others who promoted the formation of the Socialist Party in 1901 had supported Bryan and the Democratic Party in 1896. Cannon went on to explain:

> "The composition of the party was also unfavorable in some respects.... The Populist movement in the South was deflected into a reactionary channel. But there was another part of this Populist movement which was drawn into the Socialist party. The Socialist party in many parts of the country consisted of a very large percentage of former Populists. The composition of its membership in the western part of the country was very heavily weighted on the side of the petty bourgeoisie in the cities and in the countryside. At one time the largest single state membership of the Socialist party, and, if I'm not mistaken, the largest socialist vote proportionally, was in the state of Oklahoma. In the other western agrarian states also the hard-pressed tenant and mortgaged farmers and desperate petty bourgeoisie streamed into the Socialist party from the Populist movement and swelled its ranks. So the class composition of the party was not as proletarian as an ideal Socialist movement should be."

This unfavorable class composition of the Socialist Party, the weakness of the trade unions, the mistakes of the militant IWW and the treachery of labor reformism prepared the way for the decline of the American labor movement's impulse to class struggle. What we see here are the historical roots of American labor and the black struggle. Much has, in fact, changed, but evidence of these roots can still be seen today.■

Britain...

(continued from page 12)

Financial Times described the issues behind the construction strikes: "Unemployment is a big factor behind the disputes. This is a cyclical industry and 25-30 per cent of the 30,000 workers are jobless after projects dried up in recent months. There are more than 1,500 foreign workers on UK sites, which has fuelled the stoppages" (ft.com, 19 June).

Unions Must Defend Immigrant Workers!

Our articles have warned that any mobilisation of workers on the basis of protectionism is poisonous to class consciousness and plays into the hands of the fascists. In the recent elections to the European parliament, the fascist BNP secured two seats, while the right-wing populist UK Independence Party beat the hapless Labour Party, which fell into third place. We said no vote to the No2EU campaign that was led by RMT rail union leader Bob Crow in alliance with the Socialist Party and others. No2EU was supposed to provide a "left" alternative to the BNP but was centrally based on support to the anti-foreigner Lindsey strikes—the "British jobs" crusade that the BNP was riding high on. A protest rally on 6 May at the 2012 Olympics building site in Stratford, London, addressed by Bob Crow and Keith Gibson, was an orgy of nationalist protectionism. Many protesters had been brought in from Lindsey and some sported signs saying "British Jobs for British Workers" and "Fairness for British Workers." This is particularly provocative at the Olympics site where some 200 Romanian workers have been removed in a clampdown on immigrants in recent months.

As Marxists we oppose the European Union, an imperialist trade bloc and a vehicle for European capitalist classes to co-operate against the working class and oppressed minorities of each country. Our opposition is based on proletarian internationalism, which is counterposed to the "little England" nationalist opposition to the EU that is associated with Old Labour reformism, to which the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Socialist Party are wedded. Old Labour's erstwhile claim to "socialism" amounted to nothing more than a commitment to nationalised industry under capitalism, which is inherently protectionist. The extensive nationalisations of industry carried out under Clement Attlee's Labour government in the post-World War II period had nothing to do with socialism but were a "rescue package" for British capitalism, which was in profound decline against its rivals.

Compared to the Socialist Party, the SWP has taken a more critical stance on the anti-foreign-worker crusade. A recent headline says: "'British Jobs' Slogan Pushed Back but Its Argument Remains a Danger" (*Socialist Worker*, 27 June) and the article notes, "Socialist Worker has always firmly insisted that this is a divisive slogan that feeds racism and pits workers against each other." This is a cover-up of the SWP's actual support to the reactionary strikes, which is expressed in a petition being circulated by the SWP. On the one hand it says:

> "The slogan 'British jobs for British workers' that has come to prominence around the dispute can only lead to deep divisions inside working class communities. The slogan, coined by Gordon Brown in his 2007 speech to Labour's conference, is being taken up by the right wing press and the Nazi BNP. These are forces that have always been bitterly hostile to the trade union movement."

But the petition also says clearly: "We support the demands of the Lindsey Oil Refinery strike committee" ("Unite to Fight for Jobs Petition" at petitiononline.com). Those demands include: "Union controlled registering of unemployed and locally skilled union members, with nominating rights as work becomes available," which is merely another version of "British jobs for British workers."

For the trade-union bureaucracy, the Socialist Party and the SWP, support for these "British first" strikes stems from their reformist program, which accepts the framework of nationalism as opposed to proletarian internationalism. They have no answer to the worldwide capitalist crisis other than to rally in defence of British capitalism. In virtually all major capitalist countries, the union tops have responded to mass job losses and unemployment with chauvinism and calls for increasing protectionism. As we wrote in "Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!": "For the bourgeoisie, 'free trade' and protectionism are options they can debate, but for the proletariat, protectionism is poison. It is a classic means of channelling discontent over job losses into hostility towards foreign workers and immigrants while building illusions in the benevolence of our 'own' capitalists.... There is no answer to the boom-and-bust cycles of capitalism short of proletarian socialist revolution that takes power out of the hands of the irrational capitalist ruling class and replaces it with a planned, socialised economy. Only the achievement of a world socialist order can eliminate the age-old problem of poverty, scarcity and want."

We seek to build a multiethnic revolutionary workers party, forged in opposition to Labourism, to overthrow the bloodsoaked British capitalist order and replace it with working-class rule. Down with the reactionary "United Kingdom"! For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles! For a Socialist United States of Europe!■

NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August. Our next issue will be dated July 31.**

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Down With Chauvinist Campaign Against Foreign Workers!

The following article was written by our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Britain

LONDON, June 28—Powerful solidarity strikes of construction workers at many of Britain's power stations, oil and gas facilities over the past week have defeated a union-busting effort by the bosses and secured the reinstatement of some 647 construction workers at the Lindsey oil refinery in Lincolnshire, run by oil giant Total. These workers were fired on 18 June for having walked out on strike in protest when one subcontractor laid off 51 workers who, according to *Socialist Worker* [Britain] (20 June), were "stewards, activists or union members." At the same time, a different subcontractor hired a different set of roughly 60 workers who had almost identical skills as those who had been laid off. The sackings were rightly seen as an attack on the union and sparked sympathy strikes which spread to plants across England, Wales and Scotland in a show of solidarity that appears to have forced a complete climbdown by the bosses.

These sympathy strikes were necessary in order to defend the existence of the unions, and the outcome was certainly in the interests of the working class as a whole. But at the same time, the unions in these construction sites are spearheading a chauvinist campaign against foreign workers that can only fuel racist attacks on immigrants and is *poison* to class consciousness and working-class solidarity. Pitting British workers against their class brothers from other countries, this crusade undermines the fighting capacity of the unions and is detrimental to the interests of the multiethnic working class as a whole. The bosses will always seek to exploit every division among workers to go after all workers; this chauvinist campaign against foreign workers gives the bosses yet another means to attack the unions.

Beginning in January, construction workers at the Lindsey refinery staged a wave of reactionary strikes against Italian and Portuguese workers under the slogan "British jobs for British workers," a cry long associated with the fascists. Among the leaders of these strikes was Keith Gibson of the Socialist Party [affiliated with Socialist Alternative in the U.S.], who is a prominent member of the GMB (general union). The Socialist Party has tried to airbrush that slogan out of the picture. In the January strikes, the demand for "British jobs for British workers" became "local" jobs for "local" workers, but the content remained the same. The reactionary strikes and protests received enthusiastic backing from rabidly anti-union, anti-immigrant newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* and from the fascist British National Party (BNP). The outcome of the January strike at Lindsey says it all: over 100 jobs that were expected to go to Italian workers were allocated to British workers.

From the outset we have insisted that the struggle against protectionist poison is vital to the interests of all working people. In contrast to the majority of the left, we opposed the January strikes at Lindsey, noting in "Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!" (*WV* No. 930, 13 February): "The strikes were not intended to secure more jobs or indeed any gains for the working class as a whole, nor to defend existing jobs. They were about redividing the existing pool of jobs according to the nationality of the workers. These reactionary strikes, pitting British workers against foreign workers and immigrants, are detrimental to the interests of the multiethnic working class in Britain and those of the workers of Europe as a whole." The reactionary politics of this crusade are shared by the Labourite leadership of the Unite and GMB trade unions, who embraced this patriotic crusade as naturally as they embraced Labour's racist "war on terror" that is directed against Muslims.

The bottom line for the trade-union movement must not be *who* the contractors hire, but at *what rate of pay* and under what conditions. The way to undercut attempts by the bosses to "level down" the wages and working conditions, including safety standards, of all workers by playing off one nationality against the other is for the unions to demand: Full union pay for all work at the prevailing rate, no matter who does the job! Equal pay for equal work! What's needed is to mobilise the multiethnic working class *against* Gordon Brown's Labour government in a fight for jobs for *all*, through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay, and to undertake a union organising drive to draw into their ranks all workers, including those in dangerous and low-paying jobs.

The chauvinist anti-immigrant campaign takes place in the broader climate of a worldwide economic recession in which virulent racism against immigrants is on the rise. A chilling example is the recent provocative attack by the state on immigrant cleaners at London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Outrageously, when the cleaners turned up to a 6:30 a.m. meeting on 12 June, ostensibly called to discuss working conditions, 40 immigration police in riot gear who had been concealed in the building descended on these low-paid, vulnerable workers. Many have since been deported or await deportation, mainly to Latin America. The real "crime" of these workers was that they had been organised into the Unison union.

Immigrants from East Europe in particular are being viciously scapegoated for the economic crisis that stems from the capitalist system itself. Thus in Belfast, over 100 Romanian immigrants, mainly Roma (Gypsies), were driven from their homes this month by violent racist mobs, who also attacked a rally in support of immigrants. These atrocities show that there is a vital need for the unions to *defend immigrant workers!* To bring the unions' strength to bear in defence of immigrants means fighting for an end to the reactionary strikes against foreign-born workers on construction sites. We say: Down with racist attacks on immigrant workers! No deportations! Down with work restrictions on workers from EU countries in East Europe! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

Mobilising the working class in defence of immigrants requires a class-struggle leadership in the unions, forged as part of the struggle for a Leninist party that would act as a "tribune of the people." This party must be built in opposition to the existing trade-union bureaucracy and pseudo-socialists like the Socialist Party, which tries to claim that the original strikes were not aimed at foreign workers. But the truth is there for all to see. At a protest in Newark, Nottinghamshire, on 24 February against jobs being awarded to Spanish and Polish workers at the Staythorpe power station, a section of the demonstrators chanted "foreigners out." Last month in Milford Haven in South Wales, another anti-immigrant strike resulted in some 40 Polish workers losing their jobs. According to the London *Guardian* Web site (21 May), the strike was settled when "the Dutch-based employer, Hertel, agreed to withdraw 40 Poles and replace them with UK staff at the terminal owned by Exxon-Mobil and Total." While admitting that "Hertel faxed the media that the Polish workers [had] been removed from the site," the Socialist Party dismissed this by saying merely that "this was never a demand of the union." The Socialist Party proclaimed the outcome as another "victory" and blatantly admitted that the British workers "were not opposed to laggers from Poland getting work on the site as long as local laggers were given the opportunity of the work first as under the union agreement" (*Socialist*, 28 May-3 June).

Having embraced the reactionary campaign against foreign workers, the Unite and GMB union bureaucrats are now conducting a strike ballot that would bring future strikes within the provisions of the anti-union laws. The Unite statement motivating strike action repeats the claim that British workers are being discriminated against: "UK workers want fair access to UK construction projects" and alleges that "at a time when the engineering construction sector has the ability to be offering quality jobs to working people, UK workers are being excluded from these job opportunities" (unitetheunion.com). As we said regarding the January strikes, *no* British workers were fired at either Lindsey or Staythorpe. We also insist that until the workers take state power, the proletariat will not be in a position to worry about the ebbs and flows of labour migration, which is subject to the world economy more generally.

The prospect of continuing strikes has enraged the construction bosses, who are incensed that projects such as the desulphurisation plant at Lindsey are behind schedule, which means extra costs. Strikes could also disrupt major infrastructure projects such as new power stations and London's Crossrail scheme. The

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Defend Unions in the Construction Industry!

Getty

June 19: Striking workers picket outside the Lindsey oil refinery to protest mass retaliatory firings for earlier walkout against layoff of 51 workers.

PA

Protectionist rally against foreign workers at Lindsey oil refinery in January.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 940 — GCIU C-701 — 31 July 2009

Down With Obama's "War on Terror"!

Getty

U.S. Army interrogates man during patrol in Nuristan Province, Afghanistan, February 18.

In the lead-up to last year's presidential election, reformist "socialists" and liberals peddled the lie that an Obama regime would represent some kind of "change." But joblessness and foreclosures continue to climb, while Obama, a Wall Street Democrat, hands out trillions to the banks; the occupation of Iraq, which has been devastated by the 2003 U.S. invasion, continues apace; the occupation of Afghanistan is being intensified with increasing military operations costing untold numbers of civilian lives (and generating stiffer resistance against the U.S./NATO occupiers); air strikes into Pakistan have slaughtered over 300 people since Obama took office. Meanwhile, the bipartisan "war on terror"—as a pretext for U.S. military actions abroad and the domestic evisceration of civil liberties—has found a more *effective* implementer in Obama than under the Bush/Cheney gang.

In the wake of the release of Bush administration memos providing grisly details of the torture of detainees—with "methods" such as waterboarding planned and approved at the highest levels—we noted that such horrors were no "aberrations." They are the conscious policies of capitalist and imperialist regimes that routinely and necessarily use terror and degradation as tools to maintain their power. The Bush regime openly reveled in its barbarity; by putting U.S. imperialism's grisly acts of torture back behind closed doors, Obama is simply seeking to return to the bourgeois norm while continuing the same policies.

While putting torture back behind closed doors, Obama has been otherwise pursuing the same policies as the Bush administration in the "war on terror." As we wrote in "U.S. Imperialism: Torture, Repression and War" (*WV* No. 936, 8 May):

> "Obama has been showered with praise for his vow to close the U.S. prison in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, within a year. But in reality, the Obama administration is simply continuing the Bush regime's policies under a different name, with the 'war on terror' now branded 'Overseas Contingency Operations.' Significantly, the Obama administration has endorsed indefinite detention, a hallmark of police-state dictatorships and the centerpiece of Bush's war on democratic rights. Many of the Guantánamo detainees will not be released—they will be transferred to detention centers in Bagram, Afghanistan, and elsewhere."

The list goes on. Refusing to release the majority of those detained in Guantánamo, Obama is now faced with turning some of them over to U.S. criminal courts, while others are to be tried by military tribunals—whose purpose is to make sure that nobody brought before them gets off—or held indefinitely without charge. A *New York Times* (23 July) op-ed piece by Chisun Lee, a reporter for the investigative group ProPublica, noted that in determining the fate of detainees federal courts have been "functioning, in essence, as the country's national security court."

These courts have essentially been issuing the judicial branch's seal of approval for the government's detention policy. While Obama has faced some setbacks in the courts, overwhelmingly federal judges have been accommodating, including over "protection of national security secrets," with judges routinely concealing important facts, "sometimes even the very basis for deciding to keep someone locked up." Moreover, another *Times* (27 June) article noted that the Obama government is considering "issuing an executive order that would authorize the president to incarcerate some terrorism suspects indefinitely."

In Afghanistan, the U.S. Bagram airbase prison—where over 600 people are detained—has become synonymous with torture and American imperialist savagery. According to a *New York Times* article (20 July): "Military personnel who know Bagram and the prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, describe the Afghan site as tougher and more spartan. The prisoners have fewer privileges and virtually no access to lawyers or the judicial process. Many are still held communally in big cages." The article notes that conditions at Bagram and the prisons run by the U.S. puppet regime in Afghanistan are so wretched that the U.S. military is calling for "overhauling" them as "a reaction to worries that abuses and militant recruiting within the prisons are helping to strengthen the Taliban."

Additionally, there is now the "revelation" of the formation of a secret CIA

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Megahed Family

Youssef Megahed (left), victim of racist "war on terror" prosecution, visiting St. Pete Beach, Florida, with his family.

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Partisan Defense Committee

CLASS-STRUGGLE DEFENSE NOTES

French Government Represses Anti-Colonial Union Militants

New Caledonia

USTKE president Gérard Jodar (lower center), sentenced to one year in prison along with five other activists.

Les Nouvelles Caledoniennes

We print below the translation of a July 2 protest statement by the Comité de Défense Sociale, which is fraternally allied to the Partisan Defense Committee in the U.S. The CDDS is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

PARIS, July 2—Gérard Jodar, president of the Union of Kanak and Exploited Workers (USTKE), was sentenced on June 29 to one year in prison, while five of his comrades also received prison sentences of between four months and one year. Eighteen others were also given suspended sentences of four months. The Comité de Défense Sociale (Committee for Social Defense—CDDS) strongly protests this attack, which strikes at all workers in New Caledonia, France and its colonies. These sentences follow a May 28 police attack. While dozens of USTKE members, including Gérard Jodar and the others who were charged, were at the Magenta airfield protesting the firing of a worker from the Air Caledonia airline company and the attack on union rights, they were forced to flee a brutal cop attack and a rain of tear gas grenades, taking refuge in two Air Caledonia airplanes. Outrageously, they were sentenced for "prevention of the free circulation of an aircraft." In reality, they were simply defending the right to strike and to demonstrate! *We solidarize with our class brothers in New Caledonia against this French state-led witchhunt against the USTKE militants, and we demand their immediate release and the dropping of all charges.*

These prison sentences were handed down in the context of the world economic crisis. Strikes in the colonies are subjected to increasing repression. In the French West Indies, Réunion and New Caledonia [an island east of Australia], trade-union struggles, as well as those against colonial oppression, are violently repressed. In mainland France too, attacks have been increasing against workers, immigrants and youth—above all, minority youth—as well as against Corsican and Basque nationalists. What is needed is a counteroffensive by the workers movement, organized independently of bourgeois forces and without any illusion that a "left" capitalist government would be more favorably disposed toward their struggles. Colonial repression has been no less a hallmark of popular-front governments than of governments of right-wing parties—from the government of [Socialist prime minister] Guy Mollet during the Algerian War to that of [Socialist president François] Mitterrand, who oversaw the 1985 state murder of Kanak independence leader Eloi Machoro. And let us not forget the anti-union repression and, especially, the imprisonment of UGTG leaders in Guadeloupe under the government of [Socialist prime minister Lionel] Jospin and [Communist Party leader Marie-George] Buffet. That state repression prepared the attacks being waged today against the UGTG in Guadeloupe, as well as against the USTKE and trade unionists elsewhere.

The prison sentences against Jodar and his union brothers show that the bourgeoisie intends to crack down on the working class and on anyone who dares to criticize the "French Republic, one and indivisible." The USTKE, and Jodar in particular, have long been legally harassed and targeted by the French state. Just over a year ago, the CDDS protested against the sentencing of Jodar to a one-year prison term for "directly provoking an armed assembly" as well as against the sentencing of 22 other activists. Through this persecution, the bourgeois state seeks to send a message that it will crush all attempts by workers, in New Caledonia or in France, to defend themselves against layoffs and any undermining of their social gains by the state or the bosses. But the workers movement, and particularly the trade unions in the French metropolis, have the social power to fight back and to strike the capitalists where it hurts—in their pocketbooks—because it is the workers who produce the profits appropriated by the capitalists. Labor must mobilize this power to take up the defense of the USTKE militants. An attack against one is an attack against all—the entire working class is being targeted.

We are for the independence of New Caledonia and we demand the immediate withdrawal of French troops from New Caledonia and the Pacific. The aim of these attacks is to maintain the control of French imperialism over nickel in New Caledonia. The emancipation of the [indigenous] Kanak people—and harmonious relations between Kanaks, Caledonians and Oceanians—can be won only by united proletarian struggle in New Zealand, Australia, Japan and throughout the region. This perspective of achieving socialism throughout the Pacific is that of the international Trotskyist program. *Free all the imprisoned USTKE militants!* ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

On the Withering Away of the State

In his 1917 work, The State and Revolution, *Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin described the post-revolutionary transition from a workers state (dictatorship of the proletariat) to communism. This requires a series of workers revolutions internationally, extending to the economically advanced capitalist-imperialist countries. The expropriation of the capitalist class on a global scale and the establishment of collectivized, planned economies based on international planning would lay the materiel basis for the qualitative leap in labor productivity and material abundance necessary for the eventual "withering away" of the state and the creation of classless, communist society.*

The dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of suppressing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. ***Simultaneously*** with an immense expansion of democracy, which ***for the first time*** becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the money-bags, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists....

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely crushed, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (i.e., when there is no distinction between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), ***only*** then "the state...ceases to exist," and "***it becomes possible to speak of freedom.***" Only then will a truly complete democracy become possible and be realised, a democracy without any exceptions whatever. And only then will democracy begin to ***wither away***, owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery, from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually ***become accustomed*** to observing the elementary rules of social intercourse that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims. They will become accustomed to observing them without force, without coercion, without subordination, ***without the special apparatus*** for coercion called the state....

The state will be able to wither away completely when society adopts the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," i.e., when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social intercourse and when their labour has become so productive that they will voluntarily work ***according to their ability***.

—V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (1917)

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The closing date for news in this issue is July 28.

No. 940 **31 July 2009**

Freedom Now for Leonard Peltier!

A parole hearing for class-war prisoner Leonard Peltier was held on July 28, with a decision still pending. We print below a June 29 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee sent to the United States Parole Commission.

cainmo.com

The Partisan Defense Committee joins with those supporting the release of political prisoner Leonard Peltier. A prominent member of the American Indian Movement (AIM), Mr. Peltier is in prison only because of his courageous activism on behalf of Native Americans, the victims of centuries of genocidal terror.

Between 1973-1976, hated Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) agents and FBI-trained thugs terrorized Indian activists at the Pine Ridge Reservation, carrying out over 300 attacks and killing at least 69 people. In June 1975, 250 FBI and BIA agents, SWAT policemen and local vigilantes descended on the reservation and precipitated a shootout. Two FBI agents were killed. Mr. Peltier and three others were charged. All charges were dropped against one AIM activist, and

Two Black Longshoremen Face Second Trial

Drop the Charges Against Harrison and Ruffin Now!

WV Photo

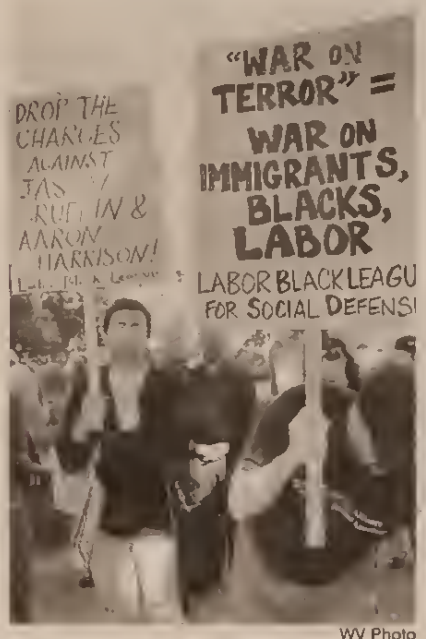
ILWU members Jason Ruffin (speaking) and Aaron Harrison at protest against their arrest, October 2007.

OAKLAND—For two long years the Yolo County California District Attorney has relentlessly prosecuted Aaron Harrison and Jason Ruffin, two black Bay Area longshoremen caught in the cross hairs of the government's "war on terror." Their only "crime" was calling their union for advice after security guards demanded to search their car as they were returning to work after lunch in the Port of Sacramento. A Yolo County jury was unable to reach a verdict on the trumped-up charges of "resisting arrest" after a nine-day trial last January. The court has now severed their cases and they face separate retrials.

The D.A. has persistently tried to strong-arm Harrison and Ruffin into accepting a settlement in which the prosecution would be dropped if the two agree to participate in an Orwellian court-approved "diversion" program that requires those completing it to admit in writing, and make "correctives" to, "misconceptions" that supposedly led to their arrest. The arrest and charges would also remain on their records. Harrison and Ruffin did nothing wrong! The two are courageously standing up for their union rights and refusing to let themselves be branded criminals, the fate that usually befalls victims of racist cop brutality under the system of capitalist injustice.

The San Francisco Bay Area's International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 membership has voted to stand behind Harrison and Ruffin. The union organized defense rallies outside the Yolo County courthouse in October 2007 and in October 2008 that brought together ILWU members from the Bay Area, Sacramento and Stockton, as well as other unionists. Supporters of the Labor Black League for Social Defense, which is fraternally allied with the Spartacist League, joined the rallies (see *WV* No. 900, 12 October 2007 and *WV* No. 926, 5 December 2008). The June meeting of the union's Longshore Division Caucus voted additional funds to the local to help cover legal fees. What's also needed is a mobilization of the ILWU membership and other unionists at the upcoming court proceedings. The union must aggressively pursue the defense of Harrison and Ruffin, whose blatant frame-up demonstrates the union-busting purpose of the "war on terror."

The domestic aim of this "war"—which the Democratic administration of Barack Obama has taken over from the Bush gang with only a few cosmetic adjustments—is to intimidate and repress immigrants, blacks and the entire working class. This can be seen clearly in the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program, which has now been implemented at ports across the country (see *WV* No. 936, 8 May). Over 1.5 million workers have had to submit to criminal background and immigration checks before being issued the biometric ID card now required for unescorted entrance into port facilities. Workers lacking U.S. citizenship or legal immigration status have been permanently barred from working in the ports, as have workers convicted of certain felonies. Port workers with selected other felony convictions—including fraud and drug possession with intent to distribute—have been denied cards if their convictions were within the last seven years or if they were released from incarceration in the last five. A recent report by the National Employment Law Project (NELP), which the ILWU engaged to help longshoremen



WV Photo

Labor Black League supporters at ILWU rally in Woodland (near Sacramento) protest arrest of Harrison and Ruffin, October 2008.

denied TWIC cards navigate the appeals process, reveals that some 54,000 port workers were rejected. These rejections were based on FBI criminal record files, some 50 percent of which are known to be inaccurate or out of date!

Those who received denials were disproportionately black and Latino, as one would expect—the racist "war on drugs" (currently responsible for over 20 percent of the felony cases in the U.S.) has particularly devastated the ghettos and barrios. NELP makes much of the fact that almost all workers who appealed inaccurate records, as well as those with disqualifying offenses who applied for a waiver, were eventually granted one, though many underwent significant financial hardship while they waited (an average of seven months). But the bottom line is that tens of thousands of port workers have lost their jobs. Fully one-quarter of those denied cards—13,148—never appealed. Another 10,000 workers were fired by angry employers because the TWIC screening process left them without a card in time for the deadline. And the report doesn't even mention the unknown number of workers—including many of the mainly immigrant, non-union port truckers—who never even applied, knowing they would be rejected.

The ILWU, following the capitalist Democratic Party that they slavishly support, has criminally joined in the chorus for increased "port security." A March statement by the ILWU International actually called for more "staffing and resources to properly administer the TWIC program," insisting, "While the ILWU has always cooperated with the TWIC program, it has been on the basis that the program is administered fairly and non-discriminatorily." Now, *after* tens of thousands of port workers have lost their jobs, the ILWU Longshore Division Caucus has finally voted to "seek the abandonment of the TWIC program altogether" on the basis that..."it does not actually improve port security" and "improperly inserts the employers (many of them foreign) into a United States government program" (*Dispatcher*, July/August 2009)!

These latter two statements embrace "port security" and "national unity" patriotism and belie any genuine opposition to TWIC. In fact, the ILWU bureaucrats tout Democratic Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez's proposed legislation to streamline, not eliminate, TWIC. Acceptance of the capitalist government's "war on terror" crackdown on the docks undermines the defense of the union and its members, such as Harrison and Ruffin. Down with TWIC and the Maritime Transportation Security Act that mandated it!

We publish below a July 16 protest letter to the Yolo County District Attorney sent by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

* * *

It is an outrage that your office continues to prosecute two black longshoremen, Aaron Harrison and Jason Ruffin from Bay Area International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, who are being railroaded to separate retrials on August 31 and September 14. In August 2007, Harrison and Ruffin entered work at the Sacramento port in the morning after being cleared by security. On returning to work after lunch, they were stopped by the security guards, who demanded to search their car, citing the maritime security regulations that are part of the government's "war on terror." While the two union longshoremen were calling their Local 10 business agent for advice, the guards called in the notoriously racist West Sacramento police. Harrison and Ruffin were dragged from their car, assaulted, maced, handcuffed and thrown in jail on charges of trespassing and resisting arrest. The trespassing charge was later dropped, but for two years the state has continued to press its anti-union prosecution of the two longshore workers whose only "crime" was trying to return to work and appealing to their union for help in doing so!

A joint trial of the two on the trumped up charges of "resisting arrest" resulted in a hung jury last January. In the past, they have rejected a settlement that would have left the original arrest on their records and compelled them to complete a demeaning and self-incriminating "diversion" program. Now Ruffin and Harrison face vindictive retrial.

The persecution of these two union members places them on the front line of the defense of labor and immigrant workers against the government's attacks under the so-called "port security" laws. The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC), implemented at West Coast ports this past spring as part of a "national security" program, vastly increases the government's ability to ride roughshod over workers on the docks. It is in the direct interest of dockworkers and the labor movement to defend Harrison and Ruffin as part of the defense of the entire working class. We demand: Drop all charges against Harrison and Ruffin now!■

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two others were acquitted in a separate trial in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Jurors at that trial stated that they did not believe the government witnesses.

Mr. Peltier's 1977 trial was moved to Fargo, North Dakota. The judge ruled out of order any evidence of the documented government violence against Native American activists at Pine Ridge. The prosecution concealed ballistics tests that showed that Peltier's gun could not have been used in the shooting. As Mr. Peltier said at his sentencing, "I'm not the guilty one here; I'm not the one who should be called a criminal."

One court proceeding after another has laid bare the evidence of his innocence and of massive prosecutorial misconduct. In a 1985 appeals hearing, the government's lead attorney admitted, "We can't prove who shot those agents."

In 1986, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the trial jury could have acquitted Mr. Peltier if records improperly withheld from the defense had been made available.

In November 2003, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals stated, "Much of the government's behavior at the Pine Ridge Reservation and in its prosecution of Mr. Peltier is to be condemned. The government withheld evidence. It intimidated witnesses. These facts are not disputed."

In 2001, in response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act and lawsuits, the U.S. government admitted it had withheld a staggering 142,579 pages of evidence of its secret COINTELPRO efforts to persecute and convict Mr. Peltier.

The long trail of injustice against Leonard Peltier has been documented in the film *Incident at Oglala*, narrated by Robert Redford, and the book *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* by Peter Matthiessen. He has been framed up for crimes the government knows he did not commit. Millions worldwide have demanded his freedom.

It is an injustice that Mr. Peltier was ever incarcerated at all. The more than 33 years of unjust imprisonment have not only robbed this honorable man of a majority of his lifetime. They have taken a devastating toll on his physical well-being as he suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, partial blindness and a heart condition. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Leonard Peltier.■

NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips alternate issues in June, July and August.**

Our next issue will be dated August 28.

Italy: For the Separation of Church and State!

The following article is translated from Spartaco *No. 71 (April 2009), newspaper of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia, section of the International Communist League.*

SPARTACO

EPA

Beppino Englaro with photo of his daughter, Eluana.

The Englaro Case: A Modern Inquisition

After visiting a friend reduced to a vegetative state as the result of a car accident, Eluana Englaro told her father that she would never want to be kept artificially alive in similar circumstances. Eluana was serious, but the monsters who lead Italian capitalism today—in collusion with the Vatican—are not interested in what intelligent young women think.

In 1992, Eluana ended up in an analogous tragedy. She had serious cerebral lesions as a result of a car accident and was reduced to a vegetative state for 17 years. Her father, Beppino Englaro, searched for a way to honor his daughter's wish. For years, he tried to get her feeding tube removed "to put an end to the horror of a non-life, which Eluana, before the accident, had always considered barbaric" (*La Repubblica*, 9 February). His efforts were systematically met with a hysterical fundamentalist crusade orchestrated by cardinals, doctors and lawyers and run by "honorable" members of parliament who trampled human dignity and their very own laws.

Even after winning a nine-year-long legal battle, Beppino Englaro was then confronted by regional and national governments that showed contempt for the judges' ruling and blocked him from disconnecting life-support equipment that was keeping Eluana artificially alive. When Eluana was transferred in early February to the "La Quiete" clinic in Udine, where doctors and nurses *valuntarily* began to honor Eluana's wishes, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi cruelly tried to ram through an order to stop them. But Eluana's debilitated body succumbed to death before the order was approved.

In a climate that recalled the medieval Inquisition, Beppino Englaro and the courageous medical team that helped his daughter were in danger of being charged with homicide. They received death threats from self-proclaimed "right to life" supporters. *Down with this grotesque persecution! Hands off Englaro and Eluana's medical team!*

The Vatican enthusiastically supported a proposed law whose intent was to prevent the repetition of other "Eluana cases" in the future. The "living will" law, otherwise known as DAT (Declaration in Advance of Treatment), not only bans any type of euthanasia, but also prohibits the removal of artificial feeding tubes, casting aside the express wishes of the patient. *Down with this reactionary law!*

We say that the state has no right to decide who lives and who dies. That's why we oppose the death penalty on principle. The state should not interfere in any personal or private decisions. We believe that people of sound mind who are afflicted with painful, incurable diseases have the right to decide for themselves if and when they want to die, as well as the right to any necessary medical assistance. Opposition to carrying out this basic form of humanitarianism is rooted in the religious conception that human beings possess a "soul" that only God may take back. The humanitarian solution in Eluana's case would have been a quick, painless and merciful injection.

The Englaro case recalls the case of Piergiorgio Welby, who was afflicted with muscular dystrophy. He died in 2006 after having been tied to an artificial respirator for nine years. In contrast to Eluana, Welby was fully conscious and launched a campaign to end his life of torment. We oppose the criminalization of suicide, which historically has been considered a crime against God and the state. We defend courageous medical doctors like Jack Kevorkian, who spent eight years in jail in the United States for having helped many patients defend their right to euthanasia and bring their suffering to an end.

It's the inquisitors, who today reside in parliament and the opulent rooms of the Vatican, who destroy lives or make them miserable in the name of a mythological God, patriarchy and the capitalist state. They are the same ones who oppose and restrict artificial insemination and medical progress through embryonic stem cell research. Berlusconi grotesquely exclaimed that Eluana "could still, hypothetically, give birth to a son." The Catholic hierarchies and the many politicians who fed like vultures on the body of Eluana Englaro and oppose the right to euthanasia would like to overturn the right to abortion, which is already severely restricted by the so-called "conscientious objector" clause of Law No. 194 [1978 law providing limited abortion rights]. Thanks to this reactionary clause, about 70 percent of gynecologists at public hospitals, pressured by Catholic fundamentalists, refuse to perform abortions (and you can be sure some of them do this to poach patients for their private clinics), creating a situation where women are often compelled not to have an abortion or to resort to expensive, illegal and potentially fatal abortions. To be sure, bourgeois women, who have the means and access to competent doctors, have always been able to terminate a pregnancy in decent conditions. But the situation is particularly serious for working-class and poor women, and even worse still for "illegal" immigrants who are terrorized by the threat of deportation if they go to public hospitals. *Free, safe abortion on demand, including for immigrants and minors! Abolish the conscientious objector clause!*

With the hypocritical pretext of defending women, on February 5, the very same week in which the government was trying to prolong the agony of the Englaro family, the Senate approved a new security package that included a so-called "anti-rape law" and legalized racist patrols supported by [Umberto Bossi's racist, far-right] Northern League. Despite the regular media campaigns to incite racist hysteria against "foreign rapists," the fact is that the majority of violence against women and children takes place inside the suffocating confines of the family. This law has nothing to do with protecting women from rape, a horrible crime that is being cynically exploited as a pretext to unleash more terror against immigrant workers and their families. *Down with the security package! Abolish the Turco-Napolitano and Bossi-Fini laws [1998 and 2002 anti-immigrant laws]! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!*

The security package is doubly racist and deadly. It increases the number of persecutory measures against the terribly oppressed and impoverished Roma [Gypsy] minority, and pushes doctors to finger "illegal" immigrants to the police, a de facto denial of their right to health care (including pregnant women and children). The press has already pointed to several cases where immigrants were turned in or were too afraid to seek medical care. *Nurses and doctors unions must mobilize against these laws! For free, quality health care for all!*

Parini High School students in Milan celebrated International Women's Day by protesting the security package and distributing condoms, explaining that the only protection they need is against venereal disease and unwanted pregnancies. Meanwhile Pope Ratzinger toured Africa railing against sex and the use of condoms. On the African continent, the deadly policies of the Catholic church and the hunger for profits of the pharmaceutical companies that refuse to provide free anti-retroviral drugs to the impoverished black masses have condemned millions to death from the AIDS virus.

The creeps that pretend to "defend life" and wanted Beppino Englaro jailed for murder include one Mario Palmaro, leader of the Catholic fundamentalist "Verità e Vita" ["Truth and Life"]. Palmaro is opposed to abortion rights even for rape victims, and he recently published a book dedicated to Lefebvrian "traditionalists." Last January 24, just before the "day of [Holocaust] remembrance," Ratzinger revoked the excommunication of four Lefebvrian bishops, including Richard Williamson, who denies the Nazi genocide. Don Abrahamowicz, who has celebrated

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Repubblica

Milan: Demonstration in defense of Law No. 194, which granted limited abortion rights, January 2006.

Defend Cuba!
Hands Off Walter Kendall and Gwendolyn Myers!

New York Times

On June 4, Walter Kendall Myers, a retired State Department analyst, and his wife, Gwendolyn Myers, were arrested on charges of acting as illegal agents of the Cuban government and passing secret information to the Cuban Intelligence Service for three decades. They are also charged with wire fraud—based on the government's claim that Kendall Myers collected his salary from the State Department without telling the government he was a Cuban agent and then wired the money to a joint account at the bank where his wife worked. The couple pleaded not guilty at their June 5 arraignment and are being held without bail. If convicted, the Myerses, both in their seventies, face a maximum sentence of 35 years—a virtual death sentence.

Kendall Myers, a great grandson of Alexander Graham Bell, started working for the State Department in 1977 as a contract instructor and rose to the position of senior analyst with top-secret security clearance, specializing in European affairs. According to the criminal complaint, they were recruited by Cuban intelligence months after a 1978 trip to Cuba. Kendall's diary of that trip, seized by the Feds, notes his growing bitterness over the lack of decent medical care, oil company greed and indifference to poverty in the U.S., in contrast to Cuba where "the revolution has released enormous potential and liberated the Cuban spirit."

Cuban leader Fidel Castro described the charges against the Myerses as an "espionage comic strip." Indeed, much of the government's story does seem to be lifted from the pages of *Mad* magazine, not least the seeming naiveté of this couple whom the Feds portray as seasoned spies. The government claims that the Myerses communicated with their Cuban handlers in encrypted Morse code messages via shortwave radio, and later by encrypted e-mails from Internet cafes. Supposedly, they passed information through shopping cart exchanges in grocery stores and had personal meetings with Cuban contacts in Mexico, Jamaica, Brazil, Ecuador and Argentina. The Feds allege that in the two years leading up to his retirement in 2007, Myers examined some 200 intelligence reports dealing with Cuba, many classified or top-secret. Without any sense of irony, intelligence experts breathed a sigh of relief that Kendall Myers lacked information that would jeopardize the U.S. network of spies in Cuba.

As the government's story goes, on April 15, an FBI undercover agent posing as a Cuban official approached Myers outside the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in D.C. where Kendall Myers taught, wished him a happy birthday, offered him a cigar and in a short conversation easily coaxed him and his wife out of two-year spy retirement. The bulk of the government's charges are based on this and two other meetings later that month, in which the Myerses are alleged to have nostalgically waxed on with details of their three decades of passing information to Cuban intelligence. The elderly couple also advised they had no wish to resume their activities on a regular basis, and told of their plans to "sail home" to Cuba to live out their days. The Myerses warmly recalled meeting with Castro in 1995 and proudly boasted they had received numerous medals from the Cuban government.

Though having no recall of meeting the couple, Castro stated, "Those who in one form or another have helped to protect the Cuban people from the terrorist plans and assassination plots organized by various U.S. administrations have done so at the initiative of their own conscience and are deserving, in my judgment, of all the honors in the world." Indeed, assisting the defense of the Cuban deformed workers state from the most dangerous imperialist power in the world is laudable.

Also in June, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal by the Cuban Five, who have been incarcerated for over ten years. Three Cuban citizens and two U.S. citizens who infiltrated and monitored violent anti-Communist exile

continued on page 9

Bettmann

Raúl Corrales

Counterrevolutionary Cuban gusanos present Democratic president Kennedy with brigade flag two years after 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion (left). Heroic Cuban soldiers defeated Kennedy's attack on Cuban Revolution.

Letter

On Executive Offices and the Capitalist State: An Exchange

To the editor:

You take the position in Workers Vanguard (No. 918 [1 August 2008]) that Socialists should not run for executive office. You argue "To run for executive office means to aspire to be the next Commander-in-Chief who decides who gets tortured, who gets bombed, who gets invaded."

On the contrary, a Socialist President would have the torturers arrested and prosecuted, starting with those who authorized the torture, to wit, Bush and Cheney et al.

He would immediately end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and bring all the troops home. And he would do everything in his power to advance the struggle for Socialism and oppose Capitalism and U.S. Imperialism.

U.S. military bases around the world would be shut down and all U.S. forces returned home and demobilized. Guantánamo would be returned to Cuba and the embargo ended. U.S. support for right wing regimes and Israel would end. The Pentagon and CIA budgets would be reduced to close to zero and the money saved would be used to better the lives of the American people.

All Federal political prisoners would be pardoned and so called "enemy combatants" would be freed or tried in Federal courts. Military commissions would be abolished. Spying on Americans would be immediately stopped. The crimes and lies of the Bush administration and its predecessors would be brought to the attention of the public. The practice of rendition would be ended. Left wing attorneys would be nominated to the Federal Judiciary.

Obviously if a Socialist were elected to the Presidency it would mean a tremendous leftward shift in U.S. politics, brought on no doubt by an economic crisis of severe proportions. The workers would be looking to Socialism as the answer to their problems.

A Socialist President by himself could not bring about Socialism, but he would explain what Socialism is and what would be needed to bring it about.

He would propose nationalizing the key industries, services and banks and operating them under workers control. If these proposals were blocked by Congress, the executive powers of Eminent Domain could be used to take over key industries etc. without Congressional approval.

He would fight for and mobilize the workers to achieve: Single Payer National Health insurance, a 30 hour week at 40 hour pay, repeal of all anti-labor laws, an indefinite moratorium on home mortgage foreclosures, a ban on companies relocating outside the country, shifting the tax burden off the workers onto the wealthy and the corporations, free college education, a guaranteed job for all, etc.

Incidentally, you might recall that both Marx and Engels believed that at least in the case of the United States and England, because of their long democratic traditions, Socialism could be achieved electorally and peacefully.

However, should a workers revolution develop in the United States, wouldn't its chances of success be far greater if the President, who is Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, were a Socialist? Think about this.

Running for the Presidency gives Socialists a wonderful opportunity to educate the American people about Socialism.

And if a Socialist were elected President it would represent a giant step toward a Socialist America.

Yours truly,
Concerned Reader

***WV* Replies:**

The starting point of the above letter, using the example of the American imperial presidency, is that the working class can utilize the existing state apparatus to implement beneficial policies and gain political supremacy. In fact, the tasks that the author proposes for a "socialist" president are hardly revolutionary. Such proposals on torture, spying, the economy and health care read like a liberal or social-democratic wish list, while the call for a ban on companies relocating abroad echoes the "Buy American" chauvinism of the Democrats and the trade-union bureaucracy. More fundamentally, the differences we have with the letter are not only over the question of running for executive offices but the very basis of our opposition to running for such offices: the nature of the capitalist state. As we wrote in our extensive article (to which we refer readers), "Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009):

> "Behind the question of running for executive office stands the fundamental counterposition between reformism and Marxism: Can the proletariat use bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois state to achieve a peaceful transition to socialism? Or, rather, must the proletariat smash the old state machinery, and in its place create a new state to impose its own class rule—the dictatorship of the proletariat—to suppress and expropriate the capitalist exploiters?"

Bourgeois politicians, sociologists and academics have utterly distorted what the

continued on page 10

Lessons of the 1934 Minneapolis Strikes

Seventy-Fifth Anniversary

The worsening condition of the working class, and the waning strength of the unions, is not the first such crisis faced by the American labor movement. In the early years of the Great Depression, the ranks of the unemployed soared while membership in the AFL craft unions had fallen precipitously. With the partial revival of industry in 1933, workers regained confidence in their ability to fight. A great strike wave erupted, concentrated in the unorganized mass production industries, only to end in a series of bitter defeats. The efforts of the workers were frustrated by the pro-capitalist AFL leaders on the one hand and by brutal government repression on the other.

The breakthrough came in 1934, 75 years ago, when three citywide strikes led by avowed socialists shook America and paved the way for the great class battles in 1936-37 that built the CIO. In Toledo, Ohio, supporters of radical labor organizer A. J. Muste's American Workers Party were in the forefront of the Auto-Lite strike. On the West Coast, dock workers and seamen, led by Communist Party (CP) supporters and other militants, fought pitched battles with the police in a three-month-long strike that included a four-day general strike in San Francisco. And in Minneapolis, Trotskyist union militants, supporters of the Communist League of America (CLA), organized and led mass strikes in the spring and summer that won union recognition for the Teamsters. Workers seeking to revitalize the labor movement today would do well to learn the lessons of these great struggles of the past.

In Minneapolis, the effective participation of a revolutionary Marxist group in actual strike organization and direction was demonstrated. Every detail of the strikes was meticulously organized in advance, proceeding from the standpoint of class war. No reliance was placed in any government agent or agencies, including Floyd B. Olson, the Farmer-Labor Party governor, and the National Labor Board of Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt. Above all, workers were prepared for the inevitable confrontations with the capitalist state.

For many years, Minneapolis had been a notoriously open shop town ruled by the Citizens Alliance, an organization of anti-union employers. An initial blow was delivered to the bosses in February 1934, when workers paralyzed the coal yards for three days and won union recognition for Teamsters Local 574. The organizers were a group of Trotskyists and their sympathizers who happened to work in the yards: the Dunne brothers (Vincent, Grant and Miles), Carl Skoglund and Farrell Dobbs.

Unlike the craft-minded bureaucrats of the AFL who aspired to build isolated job-holding trusts as a dues base and little more, the Dunne brothers and Skoglund set out to organize every truck driver and every "inside" warehouse worker industry-wide in Minneapolis. On 15 May 1934, after the bosses refused to negotiate with the growing local of 5,000 members, Local 574 went on strike. Only one of the existing union officers at the time, local president Bill Brown, actively supported the strike, which was organized and led through an elected Organizing Committee.

The Citizens Alliance had not anticipated the Trotskyists' class-struggle tactics. "Flying squads" of pickets, later widely adopted in the great CIO strikes of the late '30s, were sent rolling about town to intercept scabs. All trucking in the city was halted except union-permitted urgent services. The entire working-class population of the area was called on to support the strike. The unemployed organization, where CLA members had long been active, aligned itself with the union, and a Women's Auxiliary went into action. On May 20, 35,000 building trades workers initiated a sympathy strike, and even the conservative Central Labor Union felt obliged to vote its support. Other workers, many unorganized, stayed off their jobs and joined the pickets.

The strike was decided on May 22 when a mass mobilization of the union and its supporters sent fleeing virtually the entire city police force, as well as its 2,200 "special deputies," in what became known as "The Battle of Deputies Run." With the defeat of this attempt by the bosses' thugs to run scabs through pickets at the City Market, the companies quickly settled the strike, recognizing the union.

But the bosses would continue to stall and ignore the union, provoking another strike in July, which lasted for five weeks. The employers were given aid in their anti-union crusade by Teamsters president Daniel Tobin, a reactionary craft unionist and Roosevelt supporter who red-baited the strike leadership. Meanwhile, the CLA sent its leaders James P. Cannon and Max Shachtman to Minneapolis to help produce a daily strike newspaper, *The Organizer*, to combat the lies of the bourgeois press.

On "Bloody Friday," July 20, the cops lured picket trucks into an ambush and opened fire on the strikers, killing two and wounding 67, most of them shot in the back. Within 20 minutes of the massacre, the National Guard rolled into the area. Four days later, some 40,000 union supporters marched in the funeral for Henry Ness, Local 574's first martyr. In response, the cops promptly arrested Cannon and Shachtman as part of an orchestrated red scare, and Governor Olson declared martial law. In a pre-dawn raid, the National Guard seized the strike headquarters and arrested strike leaders, including Bill Brown and Vincent and Miles Dunne.

These actions by the "friend of labor" governor exposed Olson's capitalist loyalties for the workers to see. The Teamsters defied Olson's troops and maintained mobile picketing while organizing protests against the arrests, including another 40,000-strong demo. The union members and leaders were released within a few days. Meanwhile, Local 574 successfully navigated the artifices and tricks practiced by federal mediators, agents of the class enemy, in negotiations. After a war of attrition, on August 22 the bosses gave in to the union's main demands, including union membership for "inside" workers. Minneapolis became a solid union town.

Sparked by the tremendous gains won in the 1934 strikes, workers in the basic industries were soon flocking to union organizing meetings. With the AFL craft unions refusing to organize the unskilled, workers joined mass industrial unions, frequently under radical leadership. These unions later formed the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) after breaking away from the ossified AFL.

Despite repeated attempts by the ruling class to split and defeat the militant Teamsters, the Trotskyists remained leading union organizers, helping to build the Teamsters into a powerful, national industrial union. Even James Hoffa, who was sent back to Minneapolis in 1941 as Tobin's hatchet man against the Trotskyist union leaders, acknowledged that he had earlier learned effective union organizing from the Trotskyists. Having worked under Dobbs, Hoffa said, "I was studying at the knees of a master." It was not until the early 1940s, during World War II, that the Trotskyists were driven out of the union leadership when Roosevelt, spurred on by Tobin and the Stalinist CP, jailed 18 Trotskyist and Minneapolis Teamster leaders under the Smith Act for their opposition to U.S. imperialism in the war.

The Trotskyists' success in Minneapolis in 1934 vindicated their general policy of calling on revolutionists to enter the mainstream of the labor movement, as against the ultraleft dogma of building separate "red unions," voiced by the CP during its 1928-34 "Third Period." It also pointed to the crucial role of leadership in any class battle. In a 1942 lecture that he gave on Minneapolis, available in *The*

Minnesota Historical Society

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America

MINNEAPOLIS DRIVERS VICTORIOUS

Green & Co. Declare War On Militants

Labor Skates Stall General Textile Strike

Local 574 Wins Right to Represent Inside Men; Discrimination Barred

Agreement Answers Lies and Slanders

The Strike Triumphant

574 Acts in Enforcement of Settlement

25 August 1934

"Battle of Deputies Run," May 1934: Unionists battle strikebreaking cops and deputies during Trotskyist-led Minneapolis strike.

Left: Trotskyist newspaper announces victory of July-August strike.

Wayne State Labor Archives

San Francisco Public Library

Left: After National Guardsmen killed two strikers and wounded 25 during 1934 Toledo Auto-Lite strike, massive explosion of city's labor movement and unemployed leagues forced withdrawal of troops and won union recognition. Right: Strikers battle with cops during San Francisco general strike in 1934. Labor struggles that year set the stage for great CIO organizing drives of mid-late 1930s.

History of American Trotskyism (1944), Cannon observed:

> "In Minneapolis we saw the native militancy of the workers fused with a politically conscious leadership. Minneapolis showed how great can be the role of such leadership. It gave great promise for the party founded on correct political principles and fused and united with the mass of American workers. In that combination one can see the power that will conquer the whole world."

We reprint below two articles from the *Militant*, the newspaper of the CLA. The first, "Learn from Minneapolis!" (26 May 1934), was written by Cannon after the May strike. The second, "The Strike Triumphant" (25 August 1934), was published at the conclusion of the July-August strike.

* * *

"Learn From Minneapolis!"

(*Militant*, 26 May 1934)

Today the whole country looks to Minneapolis. Great things are happening there which reflect the influence of a strange new force in the labor movement, an influence widening and extending like a spiral wave. Out of the strike of the transport workers of Minneapolis a new voice speaks and a new method proclaims its challenge.

It was seen first in the strike of the Coal Yard Drivers, which electrified the labor movement of the city a few months ago and firmly established the union after a brief, stormy battle of unprecedented militancy and efficiency. Now we see the same union moving out of this narrow groove and embracing truck drivers in other lines.

Behind this, as was the case with the Coal Drivers, there are months of hard, patient and systematic routine work of organization. Everything is prepared. Then an ultimatum to the bosses. A swift, sudden blow. A mass picket line that sweeps everything before it. The building trades come out in sympathy. The combined forces, riding with a mighty wave of moral support from the whole laboring population of the city, take the offensive and drive all the bosses' thugs and hirelings to cover in a memorable battle at the City Market.

The whole country listens to the echoes of the struggle. The exploiters hear them with fear and trepidation. Weaving the net around the automobile workers, with the aid of treacherous labor leaders, they ask themselves in alarm: "If this spirit spreads what will our schemes avail us?"

And the workers in basic industry, vaguely sensing the power of their numbers and strategic position, can hardly help asking themselves: "If we should go the Minneapolis way could anything or anybody stop us?" The striking transport workers are a mighty power in Minneapolis today. But that is only a small fraction of the power of their example for the cheated and betrayed workers in the big industries of the country.

The Message of Minneapolis

The message of Minneapolis is of first rate importance to the American working class. A careful examination of the method from all sides ought to be put as point one on the agenda of the labor movement, especially of its most advanced section. A study of this epic struggle, in its various aspects, can be an aid to their application in other fields, and, by that, a rapid change of the position of the American workers.

There is nothing new, of course, in a fight between strikers and police and gunmen. Every strike of any consequence tells the old, familiar story of the hounding, beating and killing of strikers by the hired thugs of the exploiters, in and out of uniform. What is out of the ordinary in Minneapolis, what is more important in this respect, is that while the Minneapolis strike began with violent assaults on the strikers it didn't end there.

Minnesota Historical Society

Max Shachtman and James P. Cannon in Minneapolis during 1934 strike.

In pitched battles last Saturday and again on Monday, the strikers fought back and held their own. And on Tuesday they took the offensive, with devastating results. "Business men" volunteering to put the workers in their place and college boys out for a lark—as special deputies—to say nothing of the uniformed cops—handed over their badges and fled in terror before the mass fury of the aroused workers. And many of them carried away unwelcome souvenirs of the engagement. Here was a demonstration that the American workers are willing and able to fight in their own interests. Nothing is more important than this, for, in the last analysis, everything depends on it.

Here was a stern warning to the bosses and their hirelings, and not only those of Minneapolis. Transfer the example and the spirit of the Minneapolis strikers to the steel and automobile workers, for example, with their mass numbers and power. Let the rulers of America tremble at the prospect. They will see it! That is what the message of Minneapolis means first of all.

Mass Action

A second feature of the fight at the City Market which deserves special attention is the fact that it was not the ordinary encounter between individual strikers and individual scabs or thugs. On the contrary—take note—the whole union went into action on the picket line in mass formation; thousands of other union men went with them; they took along the necessary means to protect themselves against the murderous thugs, as they had every right to do. This was an example of mass action which points the way for the future victorious struggles of the American workers.

It is not a strike of the men alone, but of the women also. The Minneapolis Drivers' Union proceeds on the theory that the women have a vital interest in the struggle, no less than the men, and draws them into action through a special organization. The policy, employed so effectively by the Progressive Miners [a 1932 splinter from the United Mine Workers], is bringing rich results also in Minneapolis. To involve the women in the labor struggle is to double the strength of the workers and to infuse it with a spirit and solidarity it could not otherwise have. This applies not only to a single union and a single strike; it holds good for every phase of the struggle up to its revolutionary conclusion. The grand spectacle of labor solidarity in Minneapolis is what it is because it includes also the solidarity of the working class women.

The Sympathetic Strike

The strike of the transport workers took an enormous leap forward and underwent a transformation when the building-trades unions declared a sympathy strike last Monday. In this action one of the most progressive and significant features of the entire movement is to be seen. When unions begin to call strikes not for immediate gains of their own but for the sake of solidarity with their struggling brothers in other trades, and when this spirit and attitude becomes general and taken for granted as the proper thing, then the paralyzing divisions in the trade union movement will be near an end and trade unionism will begin to mean unity.

The union of the truck drivers and the building trades workers is an inspiring sight. It represents a dynamic idea of incalculable power. Let the example spread, let the idea take hold in other cities and other trades, let the idea of sympathy strike action be combined with militancy and the mass method of the Minneapolis fighters—and American labor will be a head taller and immeasurably stronger.

Those who characterize the A.F. of L. unions as "company unions" and want to build new unions at any price will derive very little consolation from the Minneapolis strike. We have always maintained that the form of a labor organization, while important, is not decisive. Minneapolis provides another confirmation, and a most convincing one, of this conception. Here is the most militant and, in many respects, the most progressively directed labor struggle that has been seen for a long time. Nevertheless it is all conducted within the framework of the A.F. of L.

The Drivers' Union is a local of one of the most conservative A.F. of L. Internationals, the Teamsters; the building trades, out in sympathy with the drivers, are all A.F. of L. unions; and the Central Labor Union, backing the drivers' strike and the possible organizing medium of a general strike, is a subordinate unit of the A.F. of L. The local unions of the A.F. of L. provide a wide field for the work of revolutionary militants if they know how to work intelligently. This is especially true when, as in the Minneapolis example, the militants actually initiate the organization and take a leading part in developing it at every stage.

The Bolshevik Militants

Further development of the union, and perhaps even of the present strike, on the path of militancy may bring the local leadership into conflict with the reactionary bureaucracy of the International and also with conservative forces in the Central Labor Union. This will be all the less apt to take the local leaders of the militant union by surprise, since most of them have already gone through the school of that experience. In spite of that, they did not turn their backs on the trade unions and seek to set up new ones artificially.

Even when it came to organizing a large group of workers hitherto outside the labor movement, they selected an A.F. of L. union as the medium. The results of the Minneapolis experience provide some highly important lessons on this tactical question. The miserable role of the Stalinists in the present situation, and their complete isolation from the great mass struggle, is the logical outcome of their policies in general and their trade union policy in particular.

The General Drivers' Union, as must be the case with every genuine mass organization, has a broad and representative leadership, freely selected by democratic methods. Among the leaders of the union are a number of Bolshevik militants who never concealed or denied their opinions and never changed them at anybody's order, whether the order came from [AFL head William] Green or from Stalin.

The presence of this nucleus in the mass movement is a feature of the exceptional situation in Minneapolis which, in a sense, affects and colors all the other aspects of it. The most important of all prerequisites for the development of a militant labor movement is the leaven of principled communists. When they enter the labor movement and apply their ideas intelligently they are invincible. The labor movement grows as a result of this fusion and their influence grows with it. In this question, also, Minneapolis is showing the way.

* * *

"The Strike Triumphant"

(*Militant*, 25 August 1934)

The stirring news of the victory of the Minneapolis strike will give heart and hope to every class conscious and union conscious worker in the United States. It comes as a beacon light on the dark sea of defeats that have engulfed the labor unions in the second strike movement under the NRA [National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933]. The thrilling outcome of the battle will give confidence to the doubting worker that labor need not lose and capitalism can be defeated. It will strengthen the conviction in the minds of every revolutionist that the policies of consistent class struggle are the only method of crowning the struggles of the working class with success.

But the working class has little time to rejoice. Bigger and fiercer battles are ahead. It must forge its weapons and prepare. Let the workers learn and assimilate the lessons of Minneapolis and they will have gained an invaluable addition to the arsenal of class weapons against

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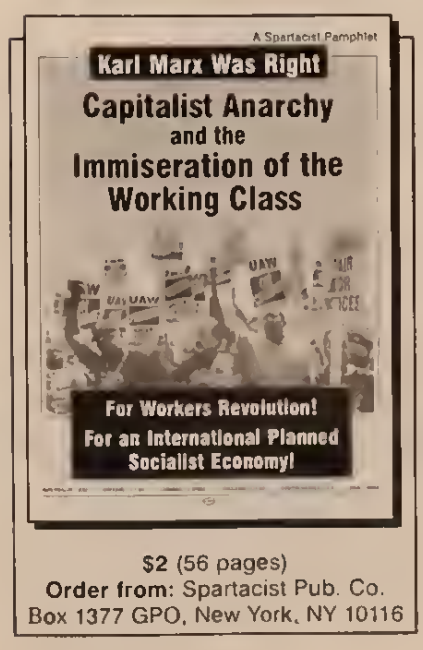

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Strikers' soup kitchen, Minneapolis, 1934.

Minneapolis...

(continued from page 7)

capital And Minneapolis is rich in lessons, so rich that if hut a part of them are digested the proletariat will take a huge stride forward.

With hardly an exeeption practically all of the major problems of strike strategy were telescoped in the hattle of 574. Lack of space does not permit us to deal with all of them. but to mention them in part: maintaining a picket line to cope with seabs, feeding live thousand strikers and their families, providing relief to the more destitute of the workers, holding high the morale of the strikers for the long weeks of the struggle, answering the lies, the calumnies and the slanders of the boss press and radio, conducting negotiations with the employers and federal arbitrators, gaining the support of workers in other unions, combating the police and the city officials.

These arc the customary problems faced by the workers when thcy rebel for better conditions. But the Minneapolis strike was complicated with other and far morc perplexing matters. From the very word go, the strike was faced with a vehement "red" scare of the bosses, kept alive for its entire duration. This was joined in by the International President of the Teamsters, Tobin, who declared the strike illegal at the very outset. Then, to make confusion worse confounded, a farmer-labor governor, having the confidence of the overwhelming majority of the workers, dealt some deadly blows at the strike while pretending friendship. A backward rank-and-file, fighting mad, but steeped in all the prejudices that the bosses had inculcated into them for years, finishes the picture.

Any other leadership than the one in Minneapolis would have foundered on the rocks of this stupendous problem. This is not because of the personal qualities or the integrity of the men, although that contributed heavily, but rather because the tactics they pursued were Marxian from beginning to end. They were thoroughly fused with the workers in the ranks. They carried on their work in the trade union not with the purpose of some sensational stunt. Building on organization, leading it to victory and helping the workers learn from their own experiences in the class struggle—that was their aim.

Previous issues of the *Militant* have commented on the military-efficient organization of the strike apparatus. But it does not hurt to repeat some of them, for it was on this very thing that success was founded. To enumerate: the picket line on wheels ready to move at a moment's notice, in contact at every step with strike headquarters—the commissary serving five thousand strikers daily on the solid assumption that an army travels on its belly—the Ladies Auxiliary giving the women a direct interest in the struggle, making them an encouragement and an aid instead of a drag on the strikers—the mobilization of the unemployed for support—and finally the daily strike bulletin, which we can safely say is one of the greatest contributions to strike strategy in recent times. Here was a paper that inspired the strikers, answered the lies of the boss press day in, day out, fanned their flagging enthusiasm, warned them of traps set by the bosses and arbitrators, showed the class lines of the struggle and performed a thousand and one other services. This was the unshakeable foundation of the strike.

Left: Commemoration for Minneapolis striker Henry Ness at the spot where he was slain by police. Right: Vincent Dunne, Trotskyist Teamsters leader, arrested during National Guard raid of strike headquarters.

Minnesota Historical Society photos

Yet all of this would have been wrecked by the "red" scare had the union leaders not heen prepared to meet it. In Frisco the cry of "Communist" tore a deep hole into the strike front. In Minneapolis it was a complete dud. The leaders faced the issne squarely They did not rush into print denying the accusations. Nor did they shout their opinions to the wide world. They explained to the men that this was part of a plot of the hosses to evade the issues, sow confusion and division in the ranks and thus smash the strike. The results are known. The red-scare fell on deaf ears.

Quite as important, if not more so, was the role of Governor Olson. With a cunning play of demagogy and harmless attacks on the employers he established himself as the "friend" of the strikers. So much so, that when he called the troops onto the streets and declared martial law, opinion was general among the drivers that it was done in their interest. Pickets began to rely on Olson's soldiers. Knowing the class nature of the state, the leaders saw how fatal such an attitude would be for the strike. They were quick to act. The *Organizer*, at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the union men, pointed out the real purpose of the troops—to break the strike. But they did not confine themselves to denunciation. Only experience would teach the strikers. A test of the right of picketing was decided upon. And then... by raiding the strike headquarters, imprisoning the leaders and the best pickets, Olson taught the strikers more about Olson than all the editorials in the world could have done. A different opinion of the Governor of Minnesota and the purpose of the state now pervades not a few members of 574.

The unions saw to it that the struggle against Olson be further pushed by exerting the severest pressure on Olson's men, the conservative leaders of the Central Labor Union. The biggest barrier to Olson's game was the support of the drivers by the entire Minneapolis labor movement. By adroit and skillful tactics the leaders of 574 forced the heads of the C.L.U. to give their assistance to the drivers and not to condemn them. When the union called upon the officials to declare a general strike in answer to the raid on the headquarters, they resisted but they were on the carpet. They brought pressure to bear on Olson and he released the strike leaders and restored the hall. While the officials of the C.L.U. and the Minnesota State Federation of Labor were successful in preventing a general strike, their answer was a living demonstration to the workers of Minneapolis of the stuff these "leaders" are made. A general strike is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. And the conservatives at the head of the Minneapolis labor movement deprived 574 of this powerful means. The rank and file will draw the proper conclusions!

In the gratifying conclusion of the battle there lie the features that distinguish the Minneapolis strike from all others in recent times. For the first time in years militants, indigenous to the industry, have entered an A.F. of L. union; converted it from a craft to an industrial union; built it up patiently and quietly; prepared carefully and struck at the proper moment; combined organization with militancy and political wisdom, and emerged from a five week's strike against insuperable odds with victory in their laps. And on top of all this, what is almost unprecedented in such strikes—not only is the union intact but the leadership is still in the hands of the genuine militants.

The example of the Minneapolis leadership will be an inspiration everywhere!

It can and will be repeated! ■

Italy...

(continued from page 4)

masses against Islam and organized anti-gay protests with the Northern League, maintains that the death penalty "in and of itself is not reprehensible" and asserted that the gas chambers in Nazi death camps were "at least for disinfection" (*La Repubblica*, 30 January). That this is not limited to a marginal wing of the Catholic church is demonstrated by the fact that the preceding Pope, Wojtyla, beatified Cardinal Stepinac, mentor to the horrific Croatian fascist regime during the Second World War.

Church and religion serve to reinforce the rule of the capitalist class. They preach submission to misery and suffering in this life in exchange for a mythical paradise after death. At the height of the hysteria around the Eluana case, Ratzinger railed against euthanasia: "Not one tear, neither of those who suffer nor of their loved ones, must be lost before God" (*Ansa*, 1 February). Bourgeois ideology demands that workers subordinate themselves to the capitalist rulers in a society where a small minority owns the means of production and exploits proletarian labor for private profit. The church attacks everything that might undermine the oppressive institution of the family. The origins of women's oppression, the most ancient and deep-rooted form of subjugation in human society, are in the family, the basic economic unit to safeguard private property and the fundamental nucleus of class society, where women are relegated to giving birth, raising "legitimate" progeny, and, in general, to performing all those domestic services that the capitalist state doesn't want to and cannot carry out. ***Women's liberation through socialist revolution!***

The hysterical crusade around the Englaro case coincided with the 80th anniversary of the Concordat (also known as the Lateran Pact) between the Italian state under Mussolini and the Catholic church in 1929. The Concordat integrated the Catholic church into the Italian state, allowing it to spread its tentacles into every state institution, from courts to schools and hospitals. The Lateran Pact is one of the pillars of the 1948 Italian Constitution, along with private property and the bourgeois state's "democracy." This Constitution sealed the betrayal of Togliatti's Communist Party (PCI), which had politically and militarily disarmed the Italian proletariat between 1943-48 and derailed a potential proletarian revolution. The PCI entered an "anti-fascist" popular-front government with bourgeois forces and the Catholic church and helped put Italian capitalism back on its feet. ***Abolish the Concordat! For the separation of church and state! Expropriate all the Vatican's wealth!***

Over the course of the next 60 years, the PCI and its successors pushed class-collaborationist and popular-frontist betrayal at the expense of the proletariat. The leaders of the Democratic Party (a fusion between the Left Democrats and the bourgeois-Catholic Margherita [Daisy] party) all agree in opposing euthanasia, but they are divided over the currently proposed law. The Catholic fundamentalists sided with the Berlusconi government while the others pursue a "soft" Catholic line—they favor suspending use of feeding tubes only on the condition that this wish was expressed in a written living will and that doctors motivated by "conscientious objection" are allowed to refuse to carry out this wish. Even Rifondazione Comunista, which considers itself to be "the People of the Constitution," has a long history of alliances with Catholic forces in national and local government, in particular with the anti-abortion Prodi [former Prime Minister]. ***Break with popular-front politics! Forge a revolutionary Leninist-Trotskyist party as a tribune of the oppressed!***

To cure the "cancer of Italy," as revolutionary democrat Garibaldi called the Vatican, requires a proletarian revolution that expropriates the bourgeoisie and the church and opens the road to a rational, socialist society, unshackling medicine and science from the profit system. Only when the huge resources and medical technology of this society are used to serve the masses, and not the profits of a few, will we be able to build a society free of racism and crippling, cruel religious superstition, a society that respects human dignity and worth. In his discourse "On Socialist Man," Isaac Deutscher observed:

> "May I remind you that Trotsky, for instance, speaks of three basic tragedies —hunger, sex, and death—besetting man. Hunger is the enemy that Marxism and the modern labor movement have taken on. In doing so they have naturally been inclined to ignore or belittle man's other predicaments. But is it not true that hunger or, more broadly, social inequality and oppression, have hugely complicated and intensified for innumerable human beings the torments of sex and death as well?
>
> "In fighting against social inequality and oppression we fight also for the mitigation of those blows that nature inflicts on us....
>
> "Yes, socialist man will still be pursued by sex and death; but we are convinced that he will be better equipped than we are to cope even with these." ■

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"War on Terror"...

(continued from page 1)

kill squad. As Alexander Cockburn wrote in *CounterPunch* (24-26 July): "And regular as the congressmen taken in adultery seeking forgiveness from God and spouse, the CIA rolled out the familiar response that yes, such a program had been mooted, but there had been practical impediments....With these pious denials we enter the Theater of the Absurd." Indeed, just like torture, assassination is, has always been and will always be the norm for U.S. imperialism.

In 2001, after the passage of the USA Patriot Act, we warned in "'Anti-Terror' Laws: Shredding Your Rights" (*WV* No. 770, 7 December 2001): "The rapidity with which the government rammed through the new laws and executive orders was made possible by the illusion that they were intended for a specific small and vulnerable sector of the population—immigrants from Muslim countries. In the government's gun sights, however, is just about everyone perceived as an opponent by the capitalist rulers." The capitalist ruling class is a tiny minority that sits atop a vast population that it exploits and oppresses. The purpose of the panoply of "anti-terror" measures and laws is to strengthen the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state against the working class and oppressed.

In 2003 and 2004 the Spartacist League and Partisan Defense Committee filed *amici curiae* (friends of the court) briefs against the indefinite detention of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was picked up at Chicago's O'Hare airport, declared an "enemy combatant," disappeared into a Navy brig in South Carolina, tortured and then convicted after a show trial in 2007 and sentenced to more than 17 years in prison. In our brief, we warned that the government is seeking to "institutionalize in the American justice system the arbitrary deprivation of rights that are the hallmarks of right-wing dictatorships propped up around the world by U.S. imperialism," adding: "What the government previously did in secret it can now conduct with the authority of a legal mandate."

Bush, Cheney & Co. oversaw the atrocity against Padilla. But the chilling case of Youssef Samir Megahed is taking place on Obama's watch. Megahed, who moved to Florida from Egypt with his family eleven years ago and is a legal U.S. resident, was acquitted in April by a federal jury on charges of transporting explosives during a road trip with a friend who had packed model rocket propellants in the trunk. Three days later, he was arrested again by immigration authorities who are seeking his deportation under the charge that he "is engaged in or is likely to engage in" terrorist activities.

The *New York Times* (4 June) noted, "Mr. Megahed is at least the third Florida defendant in three years to be brought up on immigration charges after prosecutors failed to win terrorism convictions in federal court." It further explained that immigration courts "share prosecutorial advantages similar to those found in the controversial military tribunals." In Megahed's case, several jurors who acquitted him in the federal court trial are outraged at his retrial, with several signing a statement opposing his detention. His father recently explained that if deported, Megahed, having been accused of "terror" charges in the U.S., could face further imprisonment and even torture in Egypt. His hearing is now scheduled for August 17. ***Stop the deportation of Youssef Samir Megahed! Free Jose Padilla!***

Reuters

May 10: Kabul University students protest deadly U.S. air strikes in Farah Province.

Democratic politicians have repeatedly wrung their hands in indignation over the Bush administration's torture and detention programs. But this has all the credibility of the corrupt cop in *Casablanca* who announces that he is "shocked" that there is gambling going on in Rick's Café. The Democrats have long been staunch supporters of the "war on terror," voting for (including then-Senator Obama) the USA Patriot Act and other attacks on democratic rights. Democratic Congressmen were up to their necks in helping to set up the Bush government's torture program. In September 2002, top Republican and Democratic politicians, including current House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, were given a "virtual tour" of CIA detention centers that included descriptions of waterboarding and other "enhanced interrogation" methods.

As Gore Vidal noted in a London *Guardian* (27 April 2002) piece: "Though Bush's predecessors have generally had rather higher IQs than his, they, too, assiduously serve the 1% that owns the country while allowing everyone else to drift. Particularly culpable was Bill Clinton." Vidal noted that it was Clinton who "set in place the trigger for a police state which his successor is now happily squeezing." For example, Clinton's 1996 Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act gutted *habeas corpus* rights for death row prisoners, setting the stage for further erosion of this fundamental democratic right.

The difference between the Democrats and Republicans is not what they do but how they do it. With their posture as friends of labor and minorities—and backed to the hilt by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy—the Democrats have generally been the bourgeoisie's preferred party of war, better equipped than the Republicans to sell U.S. imperialism's atrocities as exercises in "human rights" and "democracy." ***Break with the Democrats—for a workers party! U.S. out of Iraq and Afghanistan! Hands off Pakistan! Free all the detainees!***

The reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) today bemoans the fact that Obama "is embracing some of the worst abuses carried out by the Bush administration in the name of national security and the 'war on terror'" (*Socialist Worker* online, 20 March). These are the same "socialists" who published an editorial the day after Obama's inauguration titled, "Looking Forward to Change," and declared that Obama's election showed that "some of the cruel sins of America's past were finally being overcome" (*Socialist Worker* online, 21 January).

Such abject subservience to the class enemy is the hallmark of the fake left. In contrast, we base ourselves upon the lessons of the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution that smashed the capitalist system and its state, put the proletariat in power and took Russia out of the bloody maw of World War I. The leader of that revolution, V. I. Lenin, took on the reformists of his day in the wake of their capitulation to their "own" bourgeoisies as the first interimperialist war unfolded. He wrote in a 1915 piece, "The Collapse of the Second International":

> "To the class-conscious workers, socialism is a serious conviction, not a convenient screen to conceal petty-bourgeois conciliatory and nationalist-oppositional strivings.... It has long been conceded that, for all the horror and misery they entail, wars bring at least the following more or less important benefit—they ruthlessly reveal, unmask and destroy much that is corrupt, outworn and dead in human institutions. The European war of 1914-15 is doubtlessly beginning to do some good by revealing to the advanced class of the civilised countries what a foul and festering abscess has developed within its parties, and what an unbearably putrid stench comes from some source."■

Cuba...

(continued from page 5)

groups in Florida in order to stop terrorist attacks against Cuba, these men were arrested in 1998 under the Clinton administration on bogus charges of conspiracy to commit espionage and murder, as well as lesser charges like failing to register as agents of a foreign power. After being tried in Miami, a den of counterrevolutionary *gusano* (worm) activities, Gerardo Hernández was sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years; Antonio Guerrero and Ramón Labañino to life plus ten and 18 years, respectively; Fernando González to 19 years; and René González to 15 years.

In 2005, a three-judge panel of the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta threw out the 2001 convictions and ordered a new trial in a new venue because of the "pervasive community prejudice" in Miami. The trial was engulfed in anti-Communist hysteria and intimidation of anyone not toeing the *gusano* line on Cuba. During jury selection, potential jurors asked to be excused, fearing the consequences of rendering an "unsatisfactory" verdict. The atmosphere was so inflamed that the jury even convicted Hernández of conspiracy murder charges that the prosecution itself had already concluded would be an "insurmountable hurdle" to prove! After a government appeal, the full Eleventh Circuit Court reinstated the convictions in August 2006, which the Supreme Court has now refused to review. ***Free the Cuban Five! Drop the charges against Kendall and Gwendalyn Myers!***

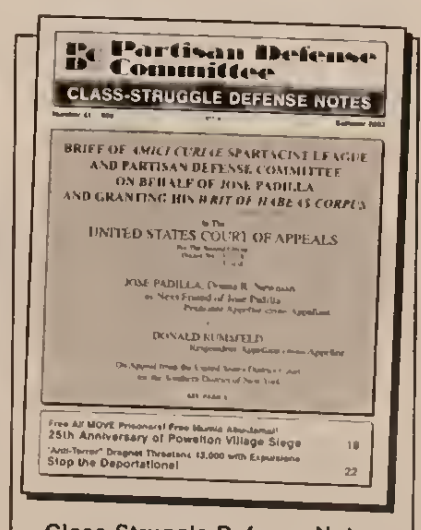
The elimination of capitalist class rule in Cuba in 1960-61 led to enormous gains for working people, despite the rule of a bureaucratic nationalist caste. The centralized planned economy guarantees everyone a job, housing, food and education. Cubans now enjoy one of the highest literacy rates in the world. The revolution especially benefited women: domination of the Catholic church was broken, and abortion is a free health service. Despite the crippling effects of the U.S. blockade, the free health care system is still far and away the best in economically underdeveloped countries. Infant mortality is lower than in parts of the "First World," and Cuba has more doctors and teachers per capita than just about anywhere in the world. As revolutionary Marxists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Cuban deformed workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, while calling for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a regime based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

For nearly 50 years, the U.S. ruling class has worked relentlessly to overthrow the Cuban Revolution and re-establish the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—from the 1961 Playa Girón (Bay of Pigs) invasion to repeated attempts to assassinate Castro; from funding counterrevolutionary terrorists in Miami to the ongoing economic embargo. Not surprisingly, the Myerses' arrest has given fuel to the most vile anti-Communist reactionaries and neo-McCarthyite witchhunters. Chris Simmons, a former U.S. counterintelligence official and founder of the Cuban Intelligence Research Center, declared, "Cuba is an intelligence trafficker. It steals U.S. secrets and it sells or barters them on the open market to anyone that has something to trade, to offer" (CNN interview, 8 June).

This is no idle rant. In 2002, as Washington was gearing up for its invasion of Iraq with the lie of "weapons of mass destruction," the government peddled lies that Cuba was developing biological weapons and transferring the technology to other "rogue" states. Cuba remains on the State Department's list of "state sponsors of terrorism." At the same time, there are elements within the U.S. bourgeoisie who look to ease the economic embargo in order to increase U.S. imperialist economic penetration and strengthen the forces of counterrevolution within Cuba.

Ronald Radosh—who has made a career in justifying the Cold War frame-up of the courageous Rosenbergs and depicting all members of the Communist Party as potential spies—has seized on the Myerses' arrest to reinvigorate his depiction of leftists as the treasonous "enemy within." Radosh is a contributing columnist to *FrontPage Magazine*, mouthpiece of right-wing racist demagogue David Horowitz, who has been on a years-long campaign to purge left-leaning professors from college campuses. According to Radosh, "Why should it be so surprising to find that Cuban intelligence seeks its agents at our universities?... Read their regular publication and you will not be surprised that Cuban intelligence sees scholars with this point of view as good picking for their agents. After all, they are merely repeating the pattern used by the KGB through the years.... Soviet intelligence used the American Communist Party and its offshoots as a recruiting ground, since its members already were committed to Communist ideology and the Soviet motherland. The people Cuban intelligence look at are the modern counterparts—people who show in their own writing where their true allegiance lies."

The demented rantings of Radosh illustrate that all opponents of the depredations of U.S. imperialism have a stake in the defense of Kendall and Gwendolyn Myers as well as of the Cuban Five. ***Defend Cuba! Down with the embargo! U.S. out of Guantánamo Bay now!***■



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Executive Office...

(continued from page 5)

state is, presenting it as a body that stands above society with the purpose of organizing it and arbitrating its class antagonisms. In reality, as Marxist leader V.I. Lenin outlined in his 1917 work, *The State and Revolution*, "the state is an organ of class *rule*, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another; it is the creation of 'order,' which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes." In modern capitalist society, the state exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie against the working class and oppressed. At its core, the state is made up of armed bodies of men and their adjuncts dedicated to that task: the cops, the military, the prisons, the courts.

The letter writer betrays huge illusions in bourgeois democracy. Such democracy is, in fact, for the bourgeoisie *against* the proletariat and oppressed. Lenin observed, "A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained possession of this very best shell...it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that *no* change of persons, institutions or parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic can shake it."

History has repeatedly demonstrated that the bourgeois state cannot be made to serve the interests of the proletariat and the oppressed. This was shown by the 1871 Paris Commune—when the Parisian proletariat held power for nearly three months before being crushed at a cost of over 20,000 lives. Lenin pointed out that Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels found only one point from the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* that they considered "out-of-date." Based on the experience of the Commune, Marx wrote in *The Civil War in France* (1871) that it had become clear that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." Lenin underlined in *The State and Revolution*, "The working class must *break up, smash* the 'ready-made state machinery,' and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it." The capitalist state must be smashed through a socialist revolution that erects in its place a workers state—i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, based on democratically-elected workers councils (soviets). It will take the victory of proletarian revolution on an international scale to lay the basis for the creation of a classless communist society and the withering away of the state.

To bolster its argument, the above letter states that "Marx and Engels believed that at least in the case of the United States and England, because of their long democratic traditions, Socialism could be achieved electorally and peacefully." In fact, in those instances where Marx asserted that in the U.S. and England "workers may achieve their aims by peaceful means" ("On the Hague Congress," 8 September 1872), he did not base himself on these countries' "long democratic traditions" but rather on his belief that these countries lacked militarist cliques or significant bureaucratic apparatuses.

However, Marx's speculation was in error. Britain had a vast colonial empire requiring large bureaucracies and military forces. In the U.S., the post-Civil War period produced an enormous boost to Northern capital, so that by the time of the Ulysses S. Grant administration all the pieces were in place for the development of full-blown U.S. imperialism in the coming decades (see "The Grant Administration (1869-1877) and the Rise of U.S. Imperialism," *WV* Nos. 938 and 939, 5 June and 3 July). At any rate, whatever Marx may have speculated, we are now in the imperialist epoch. Today, the idea of a peaceful, parliamentary transition to socialism is worse than a pipe dream; it is a noose placed on the proletariat by the reformists and other enemies of workers revolution.

Writing in 1899, after French Socialist Alexandre Millerand took a ministerial post in the government, revolutionary Marxist Rosa Luxemburg underscored: "The government of the modern state is essentially an organization of class domination, the regular functioning of which is one of the conditions of existence of the class state. With the entry of a socialist into the government, and class domination continuing to exist, the bourgeois government doesn't transform itself into a socialist government, but a socialist transforms himself into a bourgeois minister."

This point has been repeatedly confirmed, with tragic results for workers and the oppressed. In 1970 in Chile, the Socialist Party's Salvador Allende and his Unidad Popular—a coalition government that subordinated the workers to their deadly class enemies through a bloc of workers parties with a mythical "progressive" section of the bourgeoisie and the "democratic" officer corps—won a major electoral victory. When Allende became president, reformists across the globe hailed this as a great victory in the advance to socialism. But as we warned in "The Chilean Popular Front" (*Spartacist* No. 19, November-December 1970): "It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready."

It was the Chilean masses that paid for the reformists' betrayals. Backed by the U.S., General Augusto Pinochet, whom Allende had appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the Army, led a military coup on 11 September 1973 that overthrew the government, assassinated Allende and slaughtered tens of thousands of workers and other militants. Allende was not simply a martyred victim of the CIA and Chilean generals; he and his reformist supporters, with their promotion of a "peaceful" (i.e., parliamentary) road to socialism, led the Chilean working masses directly into this defeat.

Our position is that communist deputies can, as oppositionists, serve in bourgeois legislative bodies as tribunes of the proletariat. But assuming executive office means taking responsibility for the administration of the machinery of the capitalist state. And to stand for executive office carries the implication that one is ready to accept such responsibility (no matter what disclaimer one makes in advance). This can only lend legitimacy to prevailing and reformist conceptions of the state.

The 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky proved the validity of the Marxist theory on the state and made it a reality. In reaching our position on not running for executive offices, we are fulfilling and extending the work of the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky's time. As Lenin put it in *The State and Revolution*, "A Marxist is solely someone who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*." ■

"No Peace with the Present-Day State!"

We print below excerpts from an 1869 speech by German socialist leader Wilhelm Liebknecht (father of the revolutionary Marxist Karl Liebknecht) attacking the notion that socialists (who at the time called themselves Social Democrats) could get rid of capitalism through parliamentary means.

Let us assume that a candidate comes up for election and that the government is absolutely opposed to having him in the "Reichstag" [parliament]. The government will confiscate the newspapers that advocate his election—it will do so legally; it will confiscate his election handbills—also legally; or it will give permits for meetings of electors and then dissolve them—again legally; it will arrest the candidate's campaign managers—quite legally; it will arrest the candidate himself—also legally....

But let us assume that the government—either because it feels it is strong enough, or because of some other calculation—makes no use of its powers, and that it becomes possible, as some socialist statesmen of imagination still dream—to elect a social-democratic majority in the "Reichstag"—what would this majority proceed to do? *Hic Rhodus, hic salta!* Now is the moment for transforming society and the state. The majority will adopt a world-historic decision; the new era is born—don't you believe it! A company of soldiers will eject the Social-Democratic majority from its stronghold and if these gentlemen make any objection to this procedure, a few policemen will take them to police headquarters and there they will have time enough to ponder the consequences of their Quixotic aspirations.

Revolutions are not made by getting the permission of the high powers that are in authority; the socialist ideal cannot be achieved within the frame of the present-day state; it must overthrow the state in order to secure the possibility of life.

No peace with the present-day state!

—Wilhelm Liebknecht,
"The Elections to Parliament Are Only a Means of Agitation" (1869)

Lagos/NY Times

Gerrelsen/Gamma

Left: Chilean Socialist president Salvador Allende, who preached peaceful road to socialism, seen here moments before his death as right-wing military coup toppled his government, September 1973. Right: Troops round up leftists in Santiago during coup.

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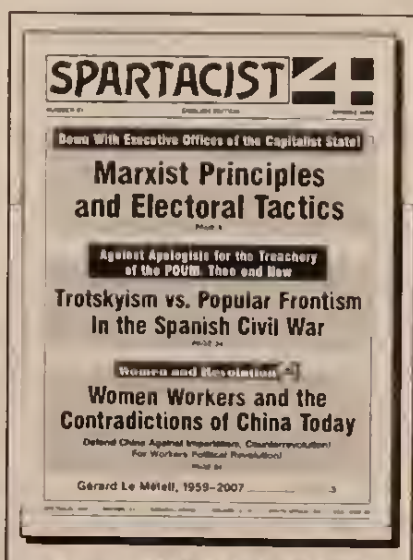

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Gates...

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an undercover cop off the stoop, thinking he was trespassing.

It was Obama's recognition of Gates's *class* status in the black petty bourgeoisie that caused the president to weigh in, likening the incident to "racial profiling." (Imagining himself in Gates's shoes, Obama quipped that if he himself tried to break into his current residence he could be shot.) Contrast that with Obama's reaction two years ago to the Jim Crow "justice" meted out to the Jena Six in Louisiana, five of whom were charged with attempted murder following a schoolyard scuffle with a white student. That scuffle followed months of racist threats and insults, including the display of hangman's nooses, after black students sat under the school's "white tree." Obama said he just wanted "fairness" in Jena, claiming it "isn't a matter of black and white."

Or look at Obama's reaction last year when the New York City cops who gunned down Sean Bell in a firestorm of 50 bullets on his wedding day were found "not guilty" on all counts. Obama intoned: "We're a nation of laws, so we respect the verdict that came down." Likewise, in 2005 when America's racist capitalist rulers, in the face of Hurricane Katrina, abandoned masses of overwhelmingly black and poor people in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, leaving them to die, Obama's verdict on this racist atrocity was that "the ineptitude was color-blind."

The hue and cry from "respectable" black petty-bourgeois spokesmen in response to Gates's arrest is in sharp contrast to their deafening silence regarding the countless black youth who are stopped, interrogated and beaten by the cops, black or white, in this country's brutal inner cities. Shern Walker's killing, for example, was pretty much treated by black leaders as a non-event.

The same day that Gates was being dragged off by Cambridge cops, Obama delivered an address to the NAACP's centennial convention in which he declared to enthusiastic applause:

> "We need a new mind set, a new set of attitudes—because one of the most durable and destructive legacies of discrimination is the way we've internalized a sense of limitation.... Yes, if you live in a poor neighborhood, you will face challenges that somebody in a wealthy suburb does not have to face. But that's not a reason to get bad grades.... No excuses."

The myth that black oppression exists in people's minds, rather than being inherent to American capitalism, serves to blame the oppressed for their oppression. Ghetto schools are nothing but holding pens for minority youth with no future in society because, especially with the deindustrialization of this country, black ghetto youth are not wanted or needed by America's capitalist rulers. The daily reality of black life in America can be measured by the nearly one million black men and women who are incarcerated in the country's jails and prisons.

After Gates's arrest, papers from the Harvard *Crimson* to the *New York Times* have run "exposés" detailing how black professionals have been harassed by police in Harvard Yard and throughout the country. "None of us African-American residents of Cambridge are surprised or shocked," one Harvard graduate student wrote (*Black Commentator*, 23 July). At Harvard, which like other elite Ivy League schools reeks with arrogant self-satisfaction in its role as a bastion of white upper-class privilege, black students and faculty are subjected to pervasive oppression and prejudice. When Larry Summers became Harvard president in 2001, he went on the warpath against the Department of African and African American Studies (of which Gates was then the head), driving out black intellectual Cornel West. Today Summers is the head of Obama's National Economic Council and key to the president's plan that has granted hundreds of billions of dollars to the capitalists while forcing increased sacrifice on the workers.

Black people in the U.S. are a race-color caste, oppressed as a people regardless of class. The position of the black middle class in this country is a precarious one, even in elite enclaves like Harvard. At the same time, as we wrote following Obama's inauguration in "Barack Obama Takes Helm of Racist U.S. Imperialism" (*WV* No. 929, 30 January):

> "Class divisions within the black population have become very sharp, marked by the growing gulf between the small minority consisting of the black petty bourgeoisie, who went through the gates opened by the gains of the civil rights movement, and black workers and the massive 'underclass' of the permanently unemployed, swollen through the devastation of American industry. Especially the upper crust of the black petty bourgeoisie could very well see material benefits from Obama's victory, which broke a 'glass ceiling.' But for the black proletariat and the masses in the ghettos, conditions of life are already being further devastated. Just as it was another popular Democratic president, Bill Clinton, who ended 'welfare as we know it,' where prior Republican administrations had failed, Obama today is in a better position to extract further 'sacrifice' from working people in the midst of the deepening recession....
>
> "The road to black freedom lies in the struggle to shatter this racist capitalist system through proletarian socialist revolution, and the power to do that lies with the multiracial working class." ■

Jackson...

(continued from page 12)

In 1913, black boxer Jack Johnson was arrested because his relationships with white women were deemed to violate the Mann Act against transporting women across state lines for "immoral purposes." In 1960, black rock 'n' roll artist Chuck Berry was also convicted under the Mann Act for transporting an underage girl across state lines. More recently, R&B singer R. Kelly was dragged through the courts on sex-related charges. Frenzy about black male sexuality is a common thread in American culture, long used as a justification for lynch rope terror.

Many black establishment figures who wouldn't normally go near a contentious "sex" issue have felt obliged to come out in Jackson's defense. The day after Jackson's death, black Representatives Jesse Jackson Jr. and Diane Watson asked for a moment of silence in the House of Representatives in Michael Jackson's memory, with at least one Congressman storming out in protest. When Democratic Representative Sheila Jackson Lee put forward a resolution proclaiming Jackson "an American legend, musical icon and world humanitarian," it was promptly killed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, to the pleasure of Republican Representative Peter King. King infamously called the media coverage of Jackson's death an "orgy" and ranted on a YouTube posting about Jackson being a "pedophile" and a "pervert."

Michael Jackson was the victim of a depraved social order with a degenerate and cruel sense of "morality." And all of these politicians—black or white, Democrat or Republican—are staunch defenders of that very social order, i.e., American capitalism.

America's Puritanical Values

As Michael Jackson was twice dragged through the courts over accusations of child sexual abuse, we defended him through his legal trials and tribulations.

AP

Fans sing and dance to the music of Michael Jackson during tribute at the Apollo Theater in Harlem, June 30.

The cases relied on hearsay, contradictory testimony and zero physical evidence. As we stated in "Michael Jackson Defeats Racist, Anti-Sex Vendetta" (*WV* No. 851, 8 July 2005):

> "Jackson steadfastly maintains that he has been asexual in his relations with boys, which is certainly possible—but for us, that is irrelevant. The state's vendetta against Jackson rested upon anti-sex laws that we oppose on principle....
>
> "Sex is a natural activity for humans—even children. We believe that in any kind of sexual relations, the guiding principle should be effective consent, regardless of age, gender or race. That is, if those involved have effective knowledge and desire to do whatever it is they will, that should be the end of it. We oppose arbitrary and reactionary state interference in such intimate matters."

Our steadfast defense of privacy and sexual freedom, more generally across the board and more specifically in the Michael Jackson case, has earned us the contempt of the liberals and the reformist left, who groove on being the "morality police" when sexual matters are involved. The most extreme demonstration of this was when our comrades in Germany were excluded from a conference called "Socialism Days" hosted by Sozialistische Alternative Voran (SAV), the sister group of Socialist Alternative in the U.S., both of which are associated with Peter Taaffe's Committee for a Workers' International (see "German Taaffeites Exclude Defenders of Michael Jackson," *WV* No. 847, 29 April 2005). For the Taaffeites, anything that doesn't conform to bourgeois society's chauvinist and repressive values deserves political censorship. Outrageously, the Taaffeites slandered our position in the Michael Jackson case as "defense of rapists" and "relativizing child abuse"! Whether explicitly or implicitly, much of the left was happy to jump on the "strange means guilty" handwagon around the Jackson case, thus demonstrating their embrace of prudish bourgeois morality and their fundamental loyalty to the current social order.

Michael Jackson's sex life was nobody's business but his own. But not unlike the countless people branded "sex offenders" in this country who have committed no crime and hurt no one and yet whose lives are made a living hell under bourgeois laws and media hysteria, Jackson had to withstand the bourgeoisie's attempts to railroad him for falling outside the norms of this society. Today, after his death, the media is replete with discussions over his finances, custody of his children and the raid on his doctor's office for suspected manslaughter.

Black Democrat Al Sharpton is a political hustler who specializes in corralling black anger at racist injustice into support for the capitalist Democratic Party. But at Jackson's elaborate, lavish and emotional memorial, he had a moment of honesty, stating: "I want his three children to know, wasn't nothing strange about your daddy. It was strange what your daddy had to deal with." The fact that the very gifted Michael Jackson was one of the entertainment world's biggest sources of scandals and attacks was not an indication of what he did, but of the sick society in which he lived. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s Arrest

Obama's "Change" Is More of the Same

AP

The arrest of distinguished black Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. has touched off a public debate on race in the U.S., ranging from media pundits and academics to President Barack Obama. Gates was arrested on July 16 by a white Cambridge, Massachusetts, cop as he stood on his own porch. Someone had called the police to report a possible break-in after seeing Gates force open the jammed door of his house. Speaking of the cop, Gates said in a statement: "Now it's clear that he had a narrative in his head: A black man was inside someone's house, probably a white person's house, and this black man had broken and entered, and this black man was me." Though he presented proof of his identity, the cops dragged Gates off in handcuffs, accusing him of being "loud and tumultuous."

The election of Obama was celebrated by many, especially blacks, who believed that it heralded an easing of the nightmare of racial oppression suffered by the mass of the black population. That an eminent world-class scholar—who is on a first-name basis with the president, no less—can be subjected to such patently racist abuse speaks volumes about the condition of black people in this country, and it shows how little it has been changed by Obama's election. The somber reality is that racial oppression is structurally embedded in American capitalism and will not be overcome short of socialist revolution.

Obama initially declared that the Cambridge police had acted "stupidly" in arresting Gates, provoking a furious uproar by police groups across the country. The head of the Cambridge police association defiantly demanded that Obama "make an apology to all law enforcement personnel." The president promptly backtracked, declaring that both sides had "overreacted." Obama invited both Gates and the cop to the White House to talk it out over a beer.

In the same spirit, liberal black commentators (and Gates himself) have responded by calling for more "sensitivity training" of the police. Such schemes simply try to clean up the cops' image so that these armed enforcers of capitalist rule can more effectively do their job. Police brutality can never be "reformed" out of the capitalist system because enforcing the capitalist rulers' racist "law and order," whether against blacks, Latinos and other minorities or striking workers, is what the cops are paid to do. In fact, the cop who arrested Gates had given classes to other cops on avoiding "racial profiling."

Obama ceded so readily to pressure from the police because, as Commander-in-Chief of racist U.S. imperialism, he is the top cop responsible for enforcing the dictates of U.S. capitalist rule, from the streets of Cambridge to Iraq and Afghanistan. The president's supposedly even-handed judgment that both sides "overreacted" in fact emboldens the police to continue to harass, intimidate and frame up black people for objecting to racist mistreatment.

Gates's "crime" was that he objected to being treated like a criminal at the hands of a cop who sought to humiliate him and put him "in his place." Gates is justifiably proud of his intellectual achievements and hardly reticent to show it. In the view of white racists, he is an "uppity" black man. Yet the treatment meted out to this eminent professor was plenty mild compared to what might happen to a ghetto resident who got into a confrontation with the cops. Gates was released after four hours in jail, and the disorderly conduct charge was dropped. Another in his place might have faced serious criminal charges, had drugs planted on him, been beaten or even shot. On July 11, Sheni Walker, a black Army veteran, was gunned down in front of his mother's home in Brooklyn when he tried to push

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The Man in the Mirror

Michael Jackson and Racist America

Los Angeles Times

On June 25, black megastar and musical icon Michael Jackson died at his home in Los Angeles. The "King of Pop," as he has been known for decades, was one of the most successful recording artists of all time and has remained hugely popular throughout the world. Following his death, there were spontaneous gatherings of fans dancing to his music in Harlem and doing the "moonwalk" or holding tributes as far away as Mexico City, Hong Kong and Paris. Rio de Janeiro's mayor announced the construction of a statue of Michael Jackson in the slums where he filmed one of his videos to "They Don't Care About Us." In Algiers, hundreds of singers and dancers from across the African continent performed the Jackson 5's "Blame It on the Boogie."

The tragedy of Jackson's death is that an extremely influential music career was driven to the brink of destruction by a savagely racist and puritanical witchhunt spanning more than a decade. The mass hysteria whipped up against Jackson over charges of "child molestation" was an indictment of this anti-sex, bigoted capitalist society, where being an eccentric black celebrity is enough for the state to try to frame you up with something. The stunning hypocrisy of the bourgeois media—which hounded and scapegoated Jackson as a "pedophile" when he was alive, even after he was acquitted of all charges, but then teemed with adulation and tributes after he died—was captured by an article in the *Los Angeles Times* (27 June): "The tabloids that had baited him mercilessly, dubbing him 'Wacko Jacko' for his erratic behavior, increasingly strange looks and accusations of child molestation, were suddenly effusive in their praise of a man 'who provided the soundtrack to a billion lives'."

Victim of Racist Vendetta

During his highly publicized career—which soared when he was only eleven years old as the lead singer of the Jackson 5 under Motown Records, through his solo career as a songwriter, musician and performer up until age 50—Michael Jackson was famous not only for his talent and versatility, but also for challenging both racial and sexual identities. In the spirit of other "crossover" artists like Chuck Berry—who was one of the first artists to perform to multiracial audiences—Jackson was known for breaking down racial barriers and was the first black artist to get heavy airplay on MTV.

But the "inexcusable" racial barrier that he attempted to break down was his appearance. Whether due to vitiligo or to skin bleaching, the fact is that his gradual "whitening" and plastic surgeries did nothing to make him less black in the eyes of racist America—a twisted confirmation of the color-caste nature of black oppression. No money in the world, no changes to your "racial" appearance, could ever change the fact that, if you are born black, capitalist America will make sure to try to put you in your place. In a country where the white supremacist ideology of racial "purity" resulted in the "one drop of black blood" rule, Jackson's physical transformation became a transgression that the bourgeois media and "public opinion" would not let him get away with.

There is a real connection among blacks to someone who, no matter what he did, always had to respond to this society's expectations of what a black person should look like, act like and sleep with. Even in death, the mud continues to be slung against this enormously talented and idiosyncratic man, with most black people defiantly coming to his defense. In the last few weeks, it was not rare for TV and radio commentators to ask why black people seem to identify with Michael Jackson since he "looked white." Rabidly vile Fox News commentator Bill O'Reilly ranted on his show *The O'Reilly Factor* against blacks seeing Jackson as their own when he looked white and "chose to have white children." In pure O'Reilly fashion, this was a bitter and unfiltered expression of the American bourgeois psyche.

Race and Sex in America

As we stated in our article "Stop Vendetta Against Michael Jackson!" (*WV* No. 818, 23 January 2004): "The Jackson case represents an intersection of blatant anti-gay bigotry, the reactionary state-enforced stigma against intergenerational sex, and racial prejudice." The intense vilification of Michael Jackson served the bourgeoisie's aim to whip up hysteria over race and sex, which is all too common in a country where blacks (famous or not) are frequently indicted on false charges involving sex.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 941 | GCU C-701 | 28 August 2009

For a Workers Party to Fight for a Workers Government!

The California Budget Crisis and the Bankruptcy of American Capitalism

AP

California School Employees Association

Above: Top California Democrats join with Republican governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in Sacramento to announce agreement on deadly budget cuts, July 20. Right: California school employees protest in San Jose against slashing of education funding, August 5.

Deadly Cuts Starve the Poor, Kill the Sick, Gut the Unions

OAKLAND—On July 20, California's Republican governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Democratic-controlled state legislature declared an agreement resolving the latest budget crisis, which had brought the state to the brink of total financial collapse. The $26.3 billion shortfall is to be made up by gouging funding for welfare, health care and education. Hundreds of thousands of state workers have been handed unilateral wage cuts of 14 percent through mandatory three-day furloughs each month. A similar program is also being imposed on all employees of the University of California system, at the same time that funds for student grants are cut and tuition hiked.

Health care services for poor children, the elderly and AIDS patients have been slashed. Some 60,000 of the poorest children in the state will lose health coverage in October, while nearly 670,000 children may lose their health care by next July. Even the wantonly cruel "welfare to work" program was cut by millions, leaving little more than food stamps for poor mothers and their children. With nearly $10 billion in cuts to public education, the jobs of thousands of teachers and school workers are to be axed, while already out-of-control class sizes balloon. Local services and infrastructure spending, such as for public housing, will also be cut; to balance its budget the state is demanding, for example, $100 million back from the city of San Jose.

Signing off on the budget, Schwarzenegger wielded his pen to chop nearly half a billion dollars more in services for the poor, disabled and elderly in line-item vetoes. In a display of the vicious calculus of capitalist austerity and the murderous state repression that enforces it, the governor vetoed any cuts in funding to build a new death row at San Quentin, where prisoners will now be double-celled while they await death at the hands of the state's executioners.

Projecting that these budget cuts "would make California more like a struggling Third World state than 21st century America," an article in *Time* magazine (19 June) pointed out that this is hardly an isolated phenomenon: "States across the nation are suffering the effects of lost tax revenue in the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. California's woes are similar and different in kind, played out on a grand scale in a state that boasts the world's eighth largest economy and a Hollywood star in the lead role." Once the symbol of the "American Dream," with "rags to riches" myths spun out courtesy of Hollywood, California today is a microcosm of the larger financial meltdown of American capitalism, with the cost being extorted from the working class, blacks, immigrants and the poor.

The speculative binges of American capitalism, where profits extracted from the exploitation of labor were squandered in various get-rich-quick schemes as opposed to investment in industry or infrastructure, have played out with a vengeance in California. Silicon Valley was the birthplace of the speculative "dot.com" bubble, which went splat in 2000-01. The "Golden State" was also a leader of the housing construction boom, employing the labor of heavily immigrant construction workers to build these homes, which were made "affordable" to minorities and working people through subprime mortgage scams. That bubble burst in 2007, triggering the present international financial crisis.

California now has one of the highest foreclosure rates in the country. The unemployment rate—officially 11.9 percent but over 20 percent when the actual number of jobless and underemployed workers is calculated—rivals that of Michigan, which has been ravaged by tens of thousands of new job losses with the financial collapse of GM and Chrysler. The reduction in Pacific Rim trade has slashed the workload in the California ports, with an accompanying decline in domestic transport. While the devastation in human terms is enormous, for the Democratic and Republican rulers of the state it is measured only in lost revenue from sales, income and property taxes.

Though reflecting the overall international capitalist economic crisis, the California budget deficit is also derived from the continuing impact of the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, which put a cap on property tax increases. Prop. 13 was a de facto racist referendum against social programs seen as benefiting blacks, Latinos and other minorities. In the words of one of its white middle-class backers: "It's these social services that annoy the heck out of me—social services for the colored, the Mexicans and so forth. Who wants to pay it all in taxes that go for things like that?" Though billed as beneficial to homeowners, the actual major beneficiaries of Prop. 13 were large commercial property owners who have reaped annual windfalls of millions. Clauses mandating a two-thirds majority to raise taxes or to pass a budget were designed to ensure that it stayed that way, effectively giving veto power to a handful

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Outrage

Leonard Peltier Denied Parole

On August 21, the U.S. Parole Commission again turned down the parole request of Leonard Peltier, a prominent member of the American Indian Movement who was framed up on charges of killing two FBI agents during the federal assault on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1975. The commission coldbloodedly declared Peltier would not be considered for parole for another 15 years! For the 64-year-old Peltier, who suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, partial blindness and a heart condition, this is a declaration by the racist rulers that this courageous man will die in prison.

Grotesquely, U.S. Attorney Drew Wrigley gloated, "Leonard Peltier is exactly where he belongs—federal prison, serving two life sentences." Wrigley added the claim that Peltier "has neither accepted responsibility for the murders nor shown any remorse," a standard ruse for denying parole to those imprisoned for crimes they did not commit. As the PDC pointed out in a June 29 letter to the Parole Commission demanding freedom for Peltier (see *WV* No. 940, 31 July):

> "One court proceeding after another has laid bare the evidence of his innocence and of massive prosecutorial misconduct. In a 1985 appeals hearing, the government's lead attorney admitted, 'We can't prove who shot those agents.'
>
> "In 1986, the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the trial jury could have acquitted Mr. Peltier if records improperly withheld from the defense had been made available.
>
> "In November 2003, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals stated, 'Much of the government's behavior at the Pine Ridge Reservation and in its prosecution of Mr. Peltier is to be condemned. The government withheld evidence. It intimidated witnesses. These facts are not disputed.'
>
> "In 2001, in response to requests under the Freedom of Information Act and lawsuits, the U.S. government admitted it had withheld a staggering 142,579 pages of evidence of its secret COINTELPRO efforts to persecute and convict Mr. Peltier."

Scott/Impact Visuals

Leonard Peltier, an accomplished artist, in front of one of his paintings.

Yet again, the depraved capitalist rulers have demonstrated there is no justice for fighters for the oppressed like Peltier. We join with millions worldwide in demanding: *Free Leonard Peltier now!* ■

TROTSKY

LENIN

Communism and Human Liberation

The goal of Marxism is to open the road to a rationally planned international division of labor based on material abundance unattainable under the anarchic and irrational capitalist profit system. Writing in 1847 in "Principles of Communism"—an alternative draft for the Communist Manifesto*—Friedrich Engels emphasized that future communist society will liberate mankind from its subordination to the division of labor and thereby from the antithesis between mental and physical labor. The precondition to that is the forging of Marxist workers parties to fight for proletarian revolutions worldwide to rip the means of production out of the hands of the capitalist exploiters.*

The common management of production cannot be effected by people as they are today, each one being assigned to a single branch of production, shackled to it, exploited by it, each having developed only *one* of his abilities at the cost of all the others and knowing only *one* branch, or only a branch of a branch of the total production. Even present-day industry finds less and less use for such people. Industry carried on in common and according to plan by the whole of society presupposes moreover people of all-round development, capable of surveying the entire system of production. Thus the division of labour making one man a peasant, another a shoemaker, a third a factory worker, a fourth a stockjobber, which has already been undermined by machines, will completely disappear. Education will enable young people quickly to go through the whole system of production, it will enable them to pass from one branch of industry to another according to the needs of society or their own inclinations. It will therefore free them from that one-sidedness which the present division of labour stamps on each one of them. Thus the communist organisation of society will give its members the chance of an all-round exercise of abilities that have received all-round development. With this, the various classes will necessarily disappear. Thus the communist organisation of society is, on the one hand, incompatible with the existence of classes and, on the other, the very establishment of this society furnishes the means to do away with these class differences.

—Friedrich Engels, "Principles of Communism" (1847)

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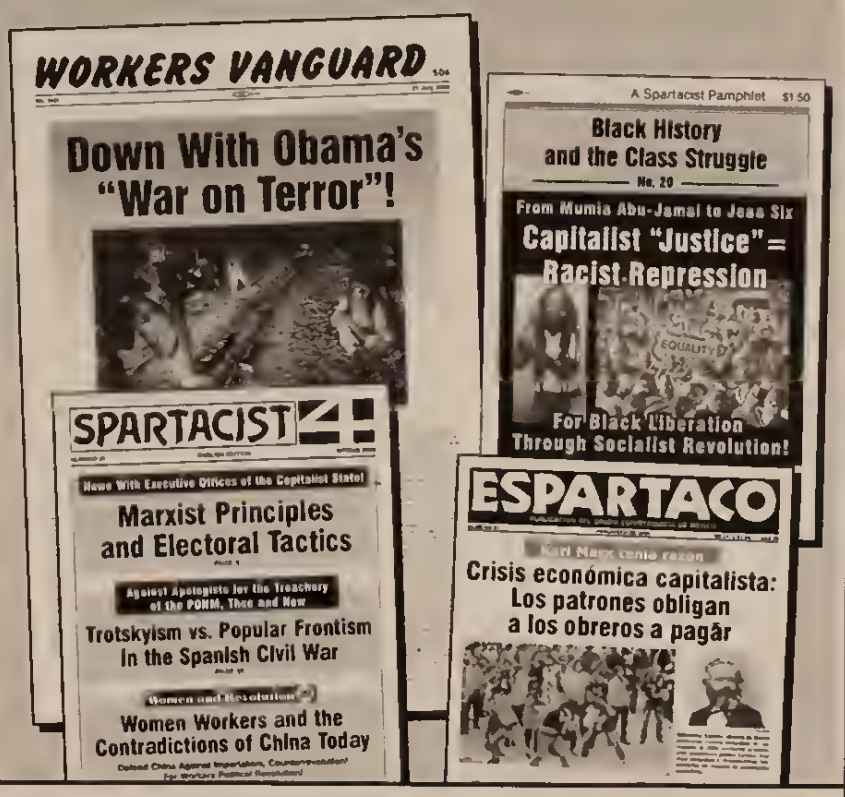

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Mumia Is an Innocent Man! Free Him Now!

For nearly three decades, Mumia Abu-Jamal has been imprisoned on death row. An innocent man, Mumia is a former Black Panther Party spokesman and supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization. He was framed up and convicted on charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in December 1981. His conviction was based on lying testimony extorted by the cops, without a shred of physical evidence. His death sentence was secured on the basis of his political convictions and powerful indictments of racist America as a Panther. Since then, court after court has refused to even consider the mountains of evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot Faulkner.

On April 6 the U.S. Supreme Court summarily turned down Mumia's petition to overturn the frame-up conviction. *Ominously, it has not ruled on the Philadelphio district ottorney's oppeol to reinstate the deoth sentence*, which was overturned by U.S. District Court Judge William Yohn in 2001. Should the Supreme Court rule in favor of the D.A.'s appeal, it would place Mumia a big step closer to the death chamber.

The relentless campaign by the cops, courts, prosecutors and judges to put Mumia to death or entomb him for life epitomizes the apparatus of state repression deployed by the rulers of this country against any perceived opponents. It throws a spotlight on the barbaric, racist death penalty, a form of institutionalized state terror directly descended in the U.S. from black chattel slavery. It goes to the core of the racist subjugation of black people in this country, which is fundamental to the maintenance of American capitalism. It underlines that the fight for Mumia's freedom must be based on a class-struggle opposition to the racist U.S. capitalist system.

It is this understanding that has infused the work of the Partisan Defense Committee—a legal and social class-struggle defense organization whose views are in accordance with the Marxist principles of the Spartacist League—since it took up Mumia's case over 20 years ago. While fighting to assist Mumia in pursuing every legal avenue, we had no illusions that this outspoken fighter for the oppressed could or would get any "justice" from the courts or any other agency of the capitalist state. Our fight has been to mobilize the multiracial working class in the U.S. and working people internationally. The proletariat is the one force in this society that has the social power to effectively challenge the capitalist rulers.

Our fight to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty is rooted in the revolutionary perspective of winning the working class to the understanding that the bourgeois state is not some "neutral" agency that serves society as a whole but rather exists to defend the class rule and profits of the capitalist class against those they exploit and oppress. To put a final halt to the grisly workings of capitalism's machinery of death—be they guardians of death row or the cops who operate as "judge, jury and executioner" in gunning down minority youth on the streets—requires sweeping away this entire system, which is based on exploitation and oppression, through socialist revolution.

In contrast, the reformist left's defense of Mumia is, in the words of Bolshevik revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky, defined by the "framework of bourgeois society and an adaptation to its legality—*i.e.*, the actual training of the masses to become imbued with the inviolability of the bourgeois state" (*Lessons of October*, 1924). For years the reformists have subordinated the fight for Mumia's freedom to peddling the most treacherous illusions in the capitalist courts with their calls for a "new," "fair" trial. Now, with the judicial appeals in which they

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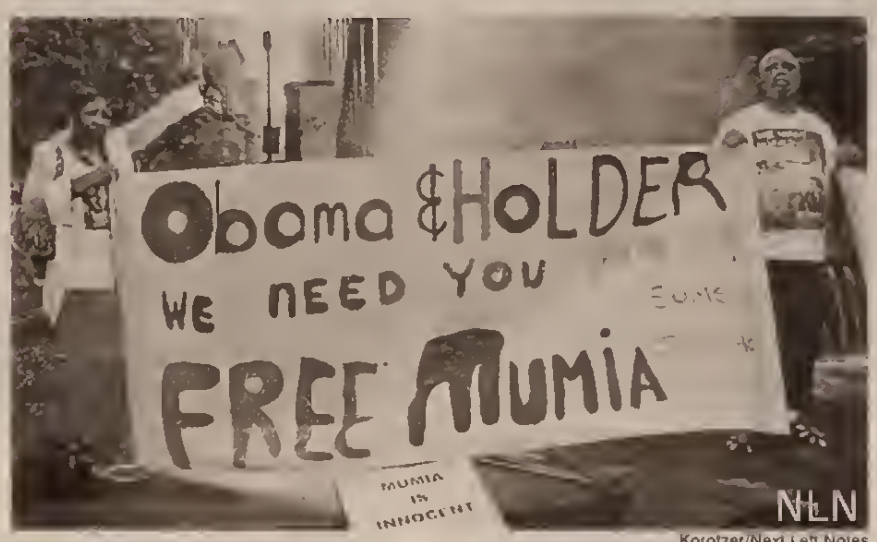
Reformists Crawl to Obama and His Top Cop



Korotzer/Next Left Notes

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition at NAACP convention in New York City, July.

COINTELPRO Charges Dropped Against Four SF8 Defendants

Early this summer, the frame-up prosecutions of the San Francisco 8 (SF8) utterly unraveled. Rounded up in January 2007 by cops in California, New York and Florida, these eight former members of the Black Panther Party (BPP) and Black Liberation Army (BLA) faced bogus charges of killing a San Francisco police officer in 1971. On July 6, the state abandoned its prosecution of Ray Boudreaux, Richard Brown, Hank Jones and Harold Taylor, confessing it had "insufficient," i.e., *no* evidence to proceed. The case against Richard O'Neal was dropped last year. *Despite lack of evidence, the state vendetta against Francisco Torres persists; the next pre-trial hearing is set for October 9.*

The victory for five of the SF8 is a genuine blow against the rulers and their state. It strikes back against murderous state attacks on fighters for black rights and opponents of U.S. imperialism and the government's attempts to smear opponents with the "domestic terrorist" label, to legitimize torture as a legally sanctioned "investigative tool." For close to 40 years, police tried to pin the killing of police officer John Young on these eight men. Torture, concealment, destruction of evidence and coerced testimony were at the core of the government's case, a vendetta concocted as part of the FBI's deadly Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) of disruption, frame-up, terror and outright murder of Black Panthers and other leftists.

This included a 1973 interrogation by two San Francisco police inspectors of three Panther members, including one of the SF8, Harold Taylor. The other two were John Bowman, who died two years ago, and Ruben Scott. The three men were tortured for several days: they were stripped naked, blindfolded, beaten, covered with blankets soaked in boiling water, shocked with electric cattle prods on their genitals and anuses. In 1975, the charges against them were thrown out of court on the basis that their supposed "confessions" had been coerced through torture.

Thirty years later, the cops and government prosecutors tried again; again they were unsuccessful in obtaining indictments against any of these men, despite convening California state and federal grand juries, first in 2003-04 and then in 2005. Still, the frame-up was revived in 2007 when the SF8 were arrested on orders from the California State Attorney General. More than two years of court hearings produced no evidence tying these men to Young's killing. The "discovered" shotgun alleged to be the "missing murder weapon" was found not to match any weapons evidence. Similarly, DNA swabs taken from the defendants in June 2006 did not match any evidence from the scene of Young's killing. The prosecution refused to release fingerprint evidence that exonerated them. The judge ruled against releasing FBI wiretap surveillance of Black Panther phone lines based on an FBI "taint team" affidavit ludicrously asserting there had been no such surveillance of the SF8. Still, the state could not make its case.

The SF8's 9 August statement read in part: "We and our support committee are claiming victory in this latest battle. As we go forward and prepare for the next one we ask that you lend your strength, your ideas and your spirit to win the dismissal of the charges against Francisco Torres. We also ask that you give your full support to the effort to gain release on parole by Jalil and Herman." Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom) pled no contest

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Drop the Charges Against Francisco Torres! Free Them All!

freethesf8.org photos

Left to right: Francisco Torres, Jalil Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom), Herman Bell. Torres still faces charges, while Muntaqim and Bell remain locked up based on prior frame-up convictions.

Young Spartacus

The United Front Tactic: Its Use and Abuse

We print below a presentation by Spartacist League/U.S. Central Committee member Joseph Seymour to the 13th National Conference of the SL/U.S. held this summer.

By Joseph Seymour

A I Savelyev

V. I. Lenin addressing Third Congress of the Communist International held in Moscow, 1921.

The tactic of the united front, as it was originally developed and expounded at the Third Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in June-July 1921, was intended for mass parties, in particular the nascent Communist Parties in Germany and France. It was aimed at winning over a section of the working-class base of mass reformist organizations led by the Social Democrats and, in France, the right-wing syndicalists. The united-front tactic was *not* considered applicable for relatively small Communist Parties, such as those in Britain and the United States.

Therefore, it's important to understand that our use of the united front is an *adaptation* of the tactic as it was originally conceived and implemented. This adaptation necessarily involves many differences, some obvious, others not so obvious. Thus the characteristic form of the original united front was a military action: a strike, a mass demonstration against government policies (sometimes involving a one-day general strike), defensive actions against the fascists. In contrast, the characteristic form of our united-front activities is a pre-planned political protest. Moreover, often these protests are based on demands that cannot possibly be achieved by the small left-wing propaganda groups participating in them, for example, a campus-based protest against the U.S. occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. Such activities are really a form of agitation, not a united-front action at all in the original sense of the term.

In this presentation I'm going to focus on the united-front tactic as it was originally developed and expounded by Lenin, Trotsky and the other leaders of the early Comintern. However, a useful approach in considering the applicability of the united front for a revolutionary Marxist propaganda group like ourselves was indicated six centuries earlier by the young English feudal warrior Henry Percy, otherwise known as Hotspur. As recounted in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part 1*, Hotspur was discussing the united-front tactic with his ally, the old Welsh chieftain Owen Glendower. Glendower declaimed: "I can call spirits from the vasty deep." To which Hotspur replied: "Why, so can I, or so can any man; but will they come when you do call for them?" If the spirits don't come when we call them from the reformist swamp, we don't have a united front.

Agitation and Propaganda

I think one source of confusion in our discussions on the united front has been terminological imprecision resulting in a lack of mutual understanding. That is, we use the same terms, but we mean different things by them. A key term in this regard is "agitation." The classic Marxist definition of agitation was provided by the early Russian Marxist Georgi Plekhanov, who differentiated it from propaganda in this way. Propaganda is the explanation of many complex ideas to the few. Agitation is the explanation of a few basic ideas to the many. However, in our tendency agitation is often conflated with a call to action. The difference between propaganda and agitation in this case is viewed and presented not in terms of explaining complex versus basic ideas, but rather in terms of the immediate realizability of the latter.

The original Comintern documents on the united front linked agitation with propaganda while clearly differentiating both from involvement in struggle. Thus the July 1921 document "On Tactics" stated:

> "From the day of its foundation the Communist International has clearly and unambiguously stated that its task is not to establish small Communist sects aiming to influence the working masses purely through agitation and propaganda, *but to participate directly in the struggle of the working masses, establish Communist leadership of the struggle, and in the course of the struggle create large, revolutionary, mass Communist parties.*"
>
> —*Theses, Resolutions and Manifestos of the First Four Congresses of the Third International* (1980)

Or again in the same document: "The Communist Parties can only develop through struggle. Even the smallest Parties should not limit themselves to propaganda and agitation."

I'll try to expound this concept in terms of our own organization by a hypothetical example. Let's say that a number of undocumented Latino immigrants working in hotels and restaurants in San Francisco are seized by federal agents and deported. Some of these immigrant workers are members of the hotel and restaurant workers union. A *WV* article focusing on this incident concludes with the position that as a general policy the labor movement must oppose deportations and support full citizenship rights for all immigrants. That's agitation. Let's continue and say that we have some supporters in the San Francisco hotel and restaurant workers union. They judge that many workers in the union are sufficiently incensed by the deportations that they're willing to engage in a protest action. So our supporters put up a motion at a union meeting for a one-day protest strike opposing deportations and for immigrant rights. That's a call to action. We should consistently use the term agitation in its original Plekhanovite sense, clearly differentiating it from propaganda on the one side and from calls to action on the other.

The United Front at the Third Congress

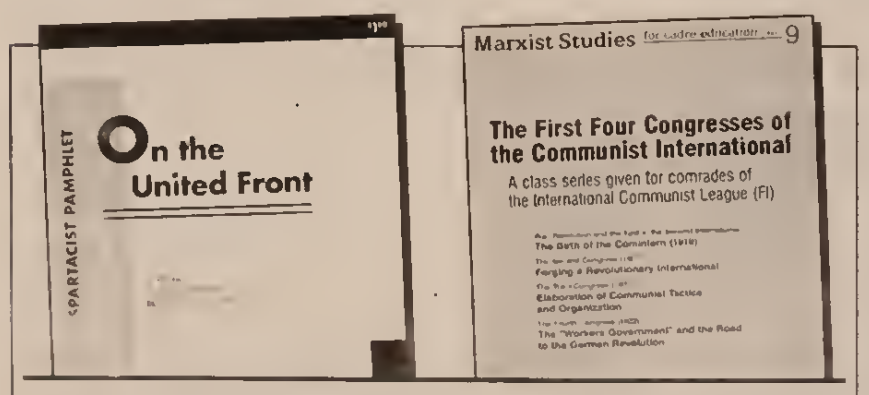
The Third Congress of the Communist International, held in mid 1921, recognized and addressed the temporary restabilization of the bourgeois order in Europe following the revolutionary turbulence of the immediate post-World War I period. In particular, revolutions in Germany and Hungary and an incipient revolution in Italy had been defeated by the forces of bourgeois reaction, abetted, especially in Germany, by the Social Democratic leaders. In 1998, comrade Reuben Samuels gave an educational on the Third Congress in which he summarized the conditions confronting it:

> "The defeats of this period demonstrated both the immaturity of the newly formed communist parties and the ability of the Social Democracy—despite its role in WWI mobilizing the proletariat for the imperialist slaughter, and despite its vanguard role in the imperialist expeditions against the Soviet Union—to maintain its base among the organized working class in the advanced industrial countries."
>
> —"The First Four Congresses of the Communist International," *Marxist Studies for Cadre Education*, No. 9 (2003)

One way of looking at the policies developed and adopted at the Third Congress, centrally the united-front tactic, is that they represented a *more advanced* stage of party building—they sought to gain the support of a *less politically advanced* layer of the working class. The main theme of the Comintern documents on tactics at this time was that a majority of the organized working class could not be won to the Communist movement simply through propaganda and agitation, that is, on the basis of ideas. For that, the Communist Parties have to demonstrate in practice leadership of day-to-day economic and political struggles, often of a defensive character, for partial demands.

However, a corollary of this position is that a minority of the working class, in fact a numerically significant minority—the most politically advanced elements—can be won over by propaganda and agitation to communism, in particular, through polemical attacks on the reformists and centrists. By 1921, the Communist Parties in Germany and France and some other European countries—Czechoslovakia, for example—had succeeded in attracting the main body of such politically advanced workers. They were now faced with a *different* task, one of gaining the support of a section of the workers who still adhered to the reformist parties and affiliated trade unions.

These workers pretty much knew what the Communists were about in terms of doctrine, policies and practices. The problem was not lack of familiarity on



A Spartacist pamphlet originally printed in 1976 as *Young Communist Bulletin* No. 3
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their part. Rather, these workers rejected what the Communists stood for. In large measure, they subscribed to bourgeois-democratic ideology, centrally the identification of democracy with a parliamentary-type government elected through universal and equal suffrage. In many cases, they viewed the Communists as irresponsible hotheads who would lead the workers following them into adventurist actions that would be smashed by the forces of the state and right-wing paramilitary groups.

However, some of these workers were willing to collaborate with the Communists on the basis—but only on the basis—of mutually agreed upon terms. The December 1921 "Theses on the United Front" describes the mindset of such workers:

> "Considerable sections of workers belonging to the old social-democratic parties are even now unwilling to accept the attacks of the social democrats and the centrists on the Communist vanguard. They are even beginning to demand an agreement with the Communists, but at the same time they have not outgrown their belief in the reformists and large numbers of them still support the parties of the Second and the Amsterdam Internationals. They do not formulate their plans and aspirations all that clearly, but in general the new mood of these masses comes down to a wish to set up a united front and make the parties and unions of the Second and the Amsterdam Internationals fight alongside the Communists against the capitalist attack."

The Amsterdam International was the trade-union grouping affiliated with the Second International.

There are two basic conditions for the united-front tactic to be effective. One, its aims have to involve issues, such as resistance to wage cuts, that reformist-minded workers would struggle for *independently* of the offer of collaboration by the Communists. Two, the Communist Party has to have sufficient social and political weight to substantially affect the outcome of such struggles. As Trotsky explained in his March 1922 piece, "On the United Front":

> "Wherever the Communist Party already constitutes a big, organized, political force, but not the decisive magnitude; wherever the party embraces organizationally, let us say, one-fourth, one-third, or even a larger proportion of the organized proletarian vanguard, it is confronted with the question of the united front in all its acuteness."
>
> —*The First 5 Years of the Communist International*, Volume 2

He contrasted such parties to those that were qualitatively smaller: "In cases where the Communist Party still remains an organization of a numerically insignificant minority, the question of its conduct on the mass-struggle front does not assume a decisive practical and organizational significance." Later in this presentation I'll discuss the tactics worked out by the Comintern leadership for those parties, particularly in Britain and the United States, that in Trotsky's words were still a numerically insignificant minority.

The united-front tactic was intended as a two-edged sword. If the reformist leaders agreed to a united-front action, the Communists would be able to demonstrate in practice that they were the most effective and militant leaders of elemental working-class struggles. In doing so they would gain a more sympathetic hearing from reformist-minded workers for their broader program and goals. If the reformist leaders rejected the offer of a united front, then the Communists could say to the workers who followed them: "See, out of hostility to Communism, your leaders are depriving you of a strong and willing ally in your own struggles against the capitalists and their state apparatus." As Trotsky put it, "It is necessary that the struggling masses should always be given the opportunity of convincing themselves that the non-achievement of unity in action was not due to our formalistic irreconcilability but to the lack of real will to struggle on the part of the reformists."

The January 1922 Comintern appeal, "For the United Proletarian Front!" argues:

> "No worker, whether communist or social-democrat or syndicalist, or even a member of the Christian or liberal trade unions, wants his wages further reduced. None wants to work longer hours, cold and hungry. And therefore all must unite in a common front against the employers' offensive."
>
> —*The Communist International, 1919-1943: Documents* (Vol. 1, 1919-1922), selected and edited by Jane Degras (1956)

To understand the central importance of elemental wage struggles in motivating and implementing the united-front tactic, one has to recognize that in Germany, France and a number of other European countries at this time the trade-union movement was divided along political lines. Most of our sections are in countries—the U.S., Canada, Britain, Germany, Australia—where there are unitary trade unions encompassing workers of all political persuasions. But we also have sections in countries—France, South Africa, Mexico—where there are competing union federations affiliated with different political parties.

The United Front in France and Germany

Our policies toward the political organizations of the working class are significantly *different* than toward the economic organizations of the working class. A political party consists of a voluntary selection of individual activists based on a comprehensive program for organizing or reorganizing society. We seek to create a politically homogeneous revolutionary vanguard party. The course of doing so often involves splitting reformist and centrist parties. Thus the French Communist Party was created in 1920 by splitting a left-wing majority from the reformist Socialist Party. Similarly, the German Communist Party was transformed in the same year from a relatively small organization, with about 80,000 members, into a mass party by splitting a left-wing majority from the centrist Independent Social Democratic Party.

However, we advocate and, when appropriate, seek to build industrial unions and factory committees encompassing *all* workers employed therein, regardless of their *political* views and affiliations. We aim to gain the political support of the majority of union members in order to replace the incumbent reformist or (in the U.S.) liberal labor bureaucrats, while preserving these organizations intact. But the incumbent bureaucrats will not necessarily play by those rules of the game, especially when they are losing it. That's what happened in France in 1921.

In the pre-World War I era, the main trade-union organization in France, the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT), was a bastion of left-wing or revolutionary syndicalism. The CGT was proudly and willfully independent of the Socialist Party and to no small degree hostile to it. Syndicalist militants viewed that party, with good reason, as a predominantly petty-bourgeois organization permeated by parliamentarist careerism and intellectual dilettantism. However, in the last few years before the war the political distance between the CGT and Socialist Party was appreciably narrowed when a new, more right-wing leadership around Léon Jouhaux took over the former. With the outbreak of the war, Jouhaux and other CGT leaders joined with Socialist Party leaders in a so-called "sacred union" of national defense. Jouhaux himself became a government official.

After the war, the CGT polarized between an avowedly reformist right wing around Jouhaux and an amorphous left wing consisting of pro-Bolshevik militants, old-line syndicalists and anarchists. Faced with the increasing prospect of losing out to the forces of the left, the Jouhaux group split the organization in late 1921. The right-wing union federation, which retained the old name, had about 250,000 members. The left-wing organization, called the CGT-Unitaire (CGTU), led by an unstable bloc of fledgling Communists, syndicalists and anarchists, claimed 350,000 members. So to be effective, workers struggles over wages, conditions and layoffs had to involve united action between the Communists and their left-wing allies in the CGTU and the reformists in the CGT.

The situation in Germany was more complicated because the political division between the Communists and reformists was intermeshed with different forms of working-class economic organization. The Social Democrats retained control over the main trade-union organization, the Allgemeine Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (ADGB). This was literally a union of trades, based on occupations, not on industrial or other economic units. For example, the machinists union consisted of machinists in different factories while not including non-machinists in these factories. While the Communist Party sought to work in the ADGB, the Social Democratic officialdom was able to use bureaucratic methods to prevent the Communists from wielding authority in the unions, corresponding to their influence in the ranks.

However, the revolutionary turbulence of late 1918-1919 gave rise to another form of mass working-class organization, factory councils. These embraced all workers in the enterprise and were more representative of the ranks than the unions. Council representatives had to be wage-earning workers in that enterprise, thus barring paid union functionaries. By late 1922, the Communist Party had gained sufficient authority to organize a national

continued on page 6

New York City, April 1927: Union Square demonstration, organized by Communist Party-affiliated International Labor Defense, to free class-war prisoners Sacco and Vanzetti.

La Bataille socialiste

Congress of CGT union federation at Lille, France, July 1921: Divisions between supporters of left and right wings, including over Communism, were hardened at the conference during which participants at times came to blows. By end of 1921, the CGT had split.

United Front...

(continued from page 5)

congress of several thousand factory councils. Thus the united-front tactic often involved calls for united action between the Communist-led factory councils and the Social Democratic-dominated unions.

A good example, albeit in the negative sense, of how the united-front tactic played out on the ground involved a railway workers strike in early 1922. The German railways were state-owned. As part of a fiscal austerity program, the government announced that 20,000 railway workers would be laid off. This provoked a strike by an independent railway union, that is, one not affiliated with the ADGB. The government, headed by the Social Democratic president Friedrich Ebert, declared the strike illegal. In response, the Communist Party issued an appeal for all workers organizations to defend the right to strike and mobilized its own forces in support of the railway workers. When the Social Democratic Party and ADGB leaders refused to support the strike, the railway union executive ordered its members back to work. However, the Communists' policies and activities increased their political authority among a strategically important section of the working class while discrediting the Social Democrats.

The United Front and the Post-Soviet Period

It's obvious that the use of the united-front tactic in elemental, day-to-day struggles of labor against capital by the early European Communist Parties is not relevant for us today, nor will it be tomorrow. However, there are other important differences that are much less obvious. One such difference is the role of freedom of criticism or, more precisely, of criticism. In his 1922 piece Trotsky identified freedom of criticism as a negative condition of the united front, that is, something the Communists would not stop doing:

> "We broke with the reformists and centrists in order to obtain complete freedom in criticizing perfidy, betrayal, indecision and the half-way spirit in the labor movement. For this reason any sort of organizational agreement which restricts our freedom of criticism and agitation is absolutely unacceptable to us."

Remember, we are considering mass Communist Parties that had the capability to make their criticisms of the reformist organizations *known* to the latter's members and supporters. The German Communist Party in the early '20s had dozens of daily newspapers, read by hundreds of thousands of workers, including a fraction of the members and supporters of the Social Democracy. The German, French and other European Communist Parties had parliamentary deputies and members of local government councils. They had trade-union officials and representatives on factory committees. In practically every factory in Germany, France and some other countries—such as Italy and Czechoslovakia—Communist workers were continually arguing politics with social-democratic, syndicalist or anarchist co-workers. There was no lack of political engagement and debate between the Communists and other tendencies in the workers movement.

The SL/U.S. faces a very different situation vis-à-vis our somewhat larger reformist opponents—the social-democratic International Socialist Organization (ISO), the Stalinoid Workers World Party and Party for Socialism and Liberation, and the Maoist-Stalinist Revolutionary Communist Party. The leaders and cadre of these organizations do not want to engage in political combat with us and do not feel any need to do so. Quite the contrary. They seek to cordon off their newer, younger members and contacts from "the Sparts." The ISO, for example, bar us from their public talks. In response, there's been a tendency to use the united-front tactic to get around the unwillingness of our reformist opponents to engage us in political debate. We can argue about the effectiveness of the tactic for this purpose.

But what is not arguable is that this was *not* the original purpose of the united-front tactic. Its aim was not to create an additional arena of debate with the reformists over doctrine and program but to engage them at an altogether different level. Thus the December 1921 "Theses on the United Front" stated: "The Communist Parties of the world, having secured complete organizational freedom to extend their *ideological influence* among the working masses, are now trying at every opportunity to achieve the broadest and fullest possible unity of these masses in *practical activity*." [emphasis in original]

I'm going to conclude by discussing the tactics worked out by the Comintern leadership for the smaller Communist Parties in Britain and the United States, for which the united front was not applicable, that is, they lacked sufficient weight to initiate and organize mass working-class actions. At the same time, these were not propaganda groups either. In the early 1920s, the British and American CPs encompassed thousands of experienced worker militants and had in their top ranks some widely known and respected workers' leaders, such as Tom Mann in Britain and William Z. Foster in the U.S.

In the case of both the British and American parties, Lenin played a central role in working out the appropriate tactics. The basic axis of the united-front tactic is the offer by the Communists of joint struggle with the reformist organizations, including their current leaderships. In Britain, this was expressed through critical electoral support to the Labour Party and also the offer by the Communists to join the Labour Party. As such, the Communists would act openly as an organized faction on the basis of a revolutionary program. At the same time, as members of the Labour Party, Communists would help to build it, for example through winning over more politically backward workers who still supported the Liberals and Tories.

In the U.S., the only mass working-class organizations were (and still are) the trade unions. Hence the Communist demand that the unions form a political party opposed to the Democrats and Republicans in which the Communists would participate. I'm not going to address whether many, perhaps most, American Communists misunderstood the tactic as calling for and being willing to build a new reformist party similar to the British Labour Party. That question is not germane to the purpose of this presentation. What is germane is an understanding that the advocacy of a trade-union-based party was the American analogue of the united-front tactic.

During the early 1970s we had an extensive internal discussion on the labor party question. The substance and conclusions of the discussion were synthesized in a presentation, "A Talk on the Labor Party Question," in 1972 by comrade Jim Robertson, that was republished in the Spartacist pamphlet *On the United Front* (January 1996). He explained:

> "In the last debate in New York, I spent all my time on the decisions of the Third and Fourth Congresses. I'm going to evade that this time and simply point out that the Labor Party slogan is the current American version of the issue of the united front. It's posed in the absence of a massive political expression of reformism or Stalinism in the United States; rather, with the organization of industrial unions with a deeply committed pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, it is toward them that the issue of proletarian unity and the process of communist triumph in struggle is centered on the Labor Party question."

Jim also emphasized that actual motion toward such a labor party, or even substantial sentiment in favor of it, would only be generated by a qualitatively higher level of working-class struggle than existed at the time or even during the big strikes that built the mass industrial unions in the 1930s. Absent such a convulsive upsurge in working-class struggle, our advocacy of a union-based party in opposition to the Democrats is a ***subordinate aspect*** of our more fundamental propaganda for the dictatorship of the proletariat (expressed using the term "workers government").

This approach to the labor party question has, I think, a general relevance for the SL/U.S. in the current period. There's been a lot of talk about whether or not we have a perspective. I think we do have a perspective but not in the way the term has been used. Our perspective should be to produce more and better propaganda in the Plekhanovite sense of explaining many complex ideas to the few. Let's stop with the get-rich-quick schemes already. When, in the future, opportunities for organizational breakthroughs arise, we'll all know it. Doubtless, these will involve both objective problems and internal differences, possibly fights, but that's not what has been happening in our tendency since the fall of the Soviet Union.

What has happened, I think, is a deep-going subjective drive to achieve organizational breakthroughs in order to demonstrate (mainly to ourselves) that we are *not* historically irrelevant, since everyone else in the world thinks we are historically irrelevant. We are historically relevant but we don't have to and cannot now demonstrate that through substantial organizational breakthroughs or some other kind of external success. That's just objective reality. ■

WV Photo

Washington, D.C., 1982: Thousands of protesters charge up Capitol Hill after stopping Ku Klux Klan march. SL-initiated united-front mobilization enlisted a section of Southern union movement in response to threat from KKK.

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Mumia...

(continued from page 3)

put their faith all but exhausted, they shamelessly go on bended knee to the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism Barack Obama and his top cop, Attorney General Eric Holder.

Reformists Beg Capitalist State for "Justice"

A petition to Holder by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFFMAJ), the International Action Center, initiated by the Workers World Party (WWP), and the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) appeals:

> "Inasmuch as there is no other court to which Abu-Jamal can appeal for justice, I turn to you for remedy....
>
> "I call on you and the Justice Department to immediately commence a civil rights investigation to examine the many examples of egregious and racist prosecutorial and judicial misconduct dating back to the original trial in 1982 and continuing through to the current inaction [!] of the U.S. Supreme Court....
>
> "I am aware of the many differences that exist between the case of former Senator Ted Stevens and Mumia Abu-Jamal. Still, I note with great interest the actions you have taken with regard to Senator Stevens' conviction to assure that he not be denied his constitutional rights."

The petition further notes, with grotesque understatement of the obvious, that Mumia, unlike Stevens, is not "a U.S. senator of great wealth and power." No kidding. Does anyone really think that the Justice Department hasn't spotted the difference between a white Senator facing bribery charges and a black radical facing the death penalty on frame-up charges of killing a cop?

This became an all-out lobbying effort at the centennial convention of the NAACP in New York in July, where Obama and Holder were keynote speakers. Standing outside the convention, the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) raised a banner pleading: "Obama & Holder/We Need You Now!/Free Mumia."

Who are they appealing to? Obama is the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism—the most bloody and rapacious imperialist power on the face of the planet—and the overseer of the slaughter of countless peoples in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. His attorney general is the warden-in-chief of the prison dungeons holding political prisoners such as Mumia and over two million people, disproportionately blacks and Latinos. It would be hard to find a more savage indictment of the reformists' fundamental belief in the "democracy" of capitalist class rule.

The appeal for Obama to "free Mumia" is all the more grotesque considering that he *supports* the death penalty. His credentials in this regard have been promoted by Philadelphia's right-wing radio broadcaster Michael Smerconish. The co-author of the book, *Murdered by Mumia*, which rehashes the lies concocted by the Philly cops and D.A.'s office to falsely convict Mumia. Smerconish sees Obama as an ally in his relentless campaign to put Mumia to death. In a 20 August *Philadelphia Daily News* op-ed article, Smerconish wrote:

> "I was also thrilled to have the chance to question him on a subject in which I've invested almost 20 years of time and energy—Mumia Abu Jamal.
>
> "Had he taken a position on the case, and if not, did he intend to do so? 'I haven't, only because the details of this event I've never studied. I'm vaguely familiar with the fact that there's been a controversy around it. So let me just lay out a very clear principle: In my mind, if somebody killed a police officer, they deserve the death penalty or life in prison,' he told me. "Amen to that."

Reporting on the lobbying effort at the NAACP convention, an article in the *Amsterdam News* (16-22 July), explained "hope is based on the premise that having a Black attorney general, a Black president...will give Abu-Jamal's plight stronger consideration." The self-proclaimed "communists" of WWP took a second to no one in championing Obama's election as "a triumph for the Black masses and all the oppressed" (*Workers World*, 20 November 2008).

In fact, after eight years of the widely despised Bush regime, Obama's election has provided a much-needed facelift for U.S. imperialism to more effectively lord it over the world's working and oppressed masses. In the U.S., the inauguration of America's first black president is a powerful propaganda weapon for the U.S. rulers. The message to black people and the oppressed is to shut up and eat it because the election of a black man as president proves the "American dream" works! This was exactly Obama's message in his speech to the NAACP convention. "No excuses. No excuses," he intoned, channeling Booker T. Washington, who over a century ago preached accommodation to the racist status quo by telling the impoverished black masses to pull themselves up by their bootstraps (if they owned any).

The reformists and liberals were successful in getting the NAACP to pass a resolution calling on Holder to investigate Mumia's case. It would be more than welcome if the NAACP put its considerable resources in a genuine fight to free Mumia. But this is not the political purpose of the WWP et al.'s petition for a civil rights investigation, which disappears the fact that Mumia is innocent and pushes illusions in the "fairness" of the American "justice" system. This was captured by NAACP chairman Julian Bond in an interview with Amy Goodman that aired on July 20. Bond argued that Mumia has "had trouble" bringing "doubts" about his case "before a tribunal that can say, you know, these things are true or they're not true. And we think he needs that chance. We think he needs that chance before the state of Pennsylvania decides to snuff his life out." I.e., notwithstanding the NAACP's opposition to the death penalty, the key thing is to let Mumia have another day in court before the rulers "snuff his life out."

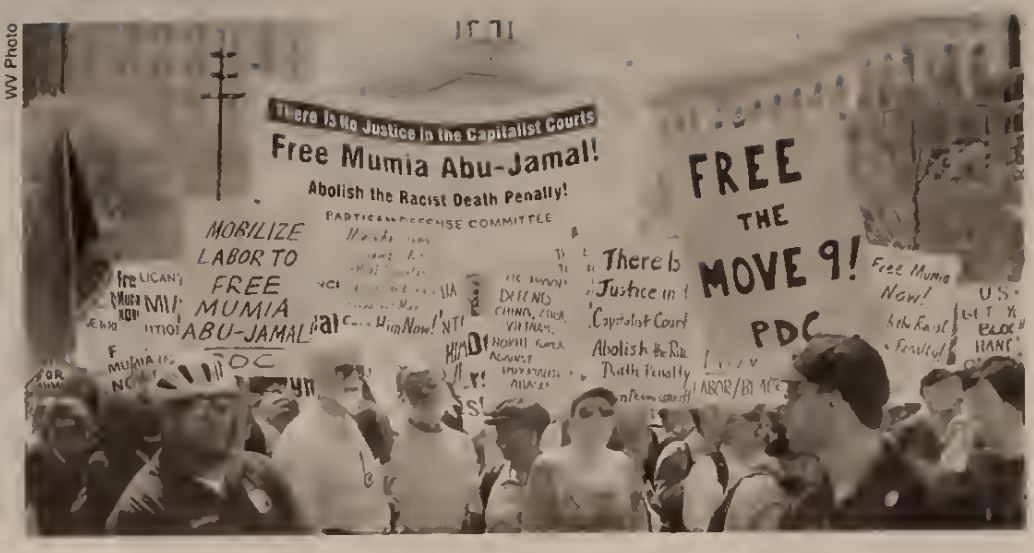
Mumia's Cause and the Fight for Black Freedom

Black oppression is structurally embedded in American capitalism and will not be overcome short of socialist revolution. In our struggle to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty, we seek to win the working class to the understanding that the fight for black freedom is central to the fight for the liberation of all of labor and the oppressed from a system based on exploitation and rooted in the segregation of the black masses at the bottom of society.

The fight to mobilize the social power of the working class in struggle for Mumia's freedom faces many obstacles. Integrated unions representing millions of workers have gone on record in support of Mumia. But these millions have not been mobilized *in action* to combat this racist frame-up. The responsibility for that lies with the pro-capitalist trade-union misleaders, who overwhelmingly refuse to call their members into action to defend their economic interests, much less in defense of a black political prisoner. The bureaucracy's class-collaborationist policies, which have tied the working class to its capitalist class enemy, have dissipated the fighting strength of the unions. The pathetic reformist and liberal petitioners of Obama and Holder similarly do their best in reinforcing belief in the inherent benevolence of the capitalist state.

For the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee, the fight for Mumia's freedom is part of the struggle to do away with a social and economic system based on exploitation, increasingly hideous oppression and state terror. The power to do that lies in the hands of the multiracial working class, with its numbers, organization, discipline and, most importantly, its capacity to bring the wheels of the capitalist profit system to a grinding halt. Mobilizing that power is a question of building a revolutionary workers party, acting as the tribune of the people that can bring to the working class the consciousness of its historic interests to be the instrumentality to shatter the power of the racist capitalist rulers and their state.

The stakes are high and the situation is grim, but any real fight for Mumia's freedom must be based on a class-struggle opposition to the capitalist rulers, who have entombed this innocent black man in prison for more than half his life. ■



WV Photo

Partisan Defense Committee/ Labor Black League's Class-Struggle Contingent at Philadelphia demonstration initiated by International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, April 2008.

James/Philadelphia Inquirer

Mumia in 1969 as Minister of Information of Philadelphia chapter of Black Panther Party.

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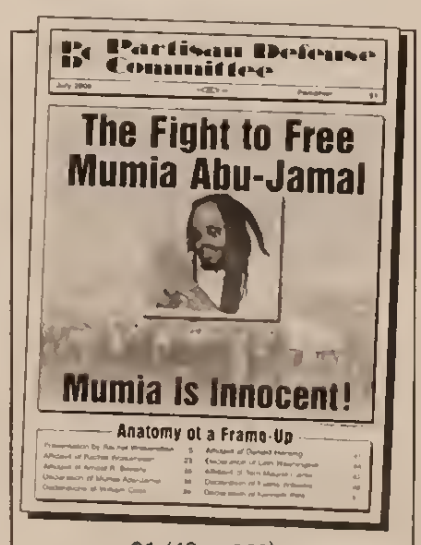

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AP

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Left: Job-seekers throng Los Angeles job fair, June 4. Right: Thousands at the Forum in L.A., many of whom lined up overnight, receive free medical care on August 11 provided by volunteers of Remote Area Medical, an organization that originally provided health services to underdeveloped countries.

California...

(continued from page 1)

of politicians—in the current pass, Republicans—to block the passage of any budgets or taxes.

Today, immigrants and black people are being hit particularly hard. As the economy spirals downward, immigrant labor, whether in construction or in the sweatshops of the Los Angeles region, is being increasingly driven out, while the anti-immigrant witchhunt continues under the Obama White House. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) raids on factories under the Bush regime, rounding up and deporting immigrant workers, have been replaced by "desktop raid" computer checks of Social Security numbers. The result has been an increase in the number of deportations, with some 215,000 people deported so far this year, more than *double* the figures for the same period in 2007 under Bush.

More than 200 unionized immigrant workers at the Overhill Farms food processing plant in Vernon, a suburb of Los Angeles, lost their jobs in May following such a check. As described by the *Los Angeles Times* (12 June): "There were no frantic scenes of desperate workers fleeing *la migra* through the gritty streets of the industrial suburb southeast of downtown Los Angeles. For more than 200 Overhill workers, however, the effect was devastating: All lost steady jobs last month and now find themselves in a precarious employment market, without severance pay or medical insurance." *Down with all I.C.E. raids—stop the deportations! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Organize the unorganized!*

In the Bay Area, the city of Oakland, with its substantial black and Latino population, never recovered from the last "jobless recovery," or, more to the point, from the destruction of most of the area's manufacturing base in the deindustrialization of America in the 1980s. According to the 2000 census, some 20 percent of all households in the city live on less than $15,000 a year. Nationwide, the official unemployment rate among blacks has risen from 8.9 percent in the first quarter of 2008 to 14.5 percent in July. But these figures are no real measure of the joblessness and destitution in this country's inner cities, where blacks have long been the uncounted "surplus population" of American capitalism.

Obama's "Economic Recovery" Fraud

Only a few short months ago, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) was celebrating the end of "the conservative dogmas and prejudices that drove government policy during more than a quarter-century of right-wing dominance—tax cuts are good, 'big government' is bad, welfare is worse" (*Socialist Worker* online, 3 March). The cause for this jubilation was Democratic president Barack Obama's federal budget proposals, which the ISO editorial declared would "increase spending on programs for the poor, set a goal of 'universal' health care coverage, expand access to higher education." The ISO's delusions to the contrary, the fact that the already paltry sums spent on such programs are being cut even further in states across the country is more than testimony to the cynical fraud of Obama's economic "stimulus package."

A Wall Street Democrat, Obama increased the federal deficit by a trillion dollars to bail out the bankers, auto bosses and other sinking titans of American capitalism. The message for everyone else was "sacrifice"—a program enforced by the venal sellouts who head the unions in this country. Like the leaders of the United Auto Workers, who forked over gains won through decades of hard struggle in order to bail out the Big Three auto producers, the heads of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), representing many of California's city and government workers, also accept that the working class must play its part in paying for the economic meltdown.

In the midst of the California budget crisis, the unions who run and maintain the BART transit system in the Bay Area were locked in a contract battle with the transit bosses, who are demanding $100 million in concessions. The BART unions have a lot of social power, with the ability to shut down a transit system with some 350,000 daily riders. The multiracial membership of BART's unions is a living link to masses of black and immigrant poor. Championing demands addressed to their needs—from the fight for free, mass transit to free, quality health care for all—would win the BART unions plenty of allies.

But this is the polar opposite of the strategy of the pro-capitalist trade-union misleaders. When Oscar Grant, a young black man, was killed on New Year's Day by a BART cop in a train station, the misleaders of BART's unions did not even issue a statement of protest, much less mobilize their members, in opposition to Grant's coldblooded execution. Doubtless this is because BART's killer cops are organized in a "union" affiliated with the SEIU. The cops are enforcers of capitalist class rule against working people and the oppressed and have no place in the workers movement. *Cops, prison guards and security guards out of the unions!*

A real fight in defense of BART's workforce and the Bay Area's black and minority masses would pose a direct challenge to the economic and political prerogatives of the capitalist ruling class. Instead, in a cringing display of their fundamental belief in the capitalist profit system, the BART union misleaders have danced to the bosses' tune by shouldering their "share" of responsibility. When the membership of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555, representing BART drivers and station agents, twice voted down a massive giveback deal, the big guns of the California Federation of Labor and the local labor councils, as well as black Democratic Party Congresswoman Barbara Lee, were brought in to enforce class peace. Hours before the ATU ranks were set to strike at 12:01 a.m. on August 17, a new version of the same sellout was announced by the ATU tops. Another vote is now scheduled for August 25.

Here is an object lesson in the role of the trade-union bureaucrats as the "labor lieutenants of the capitalist class"—a role that is today expressed in the union tops' prostration before the Obama administration. When the capitalist rulers declare "there is no money," the labor tops salute and offer to sacrifice their members' wages and work and living conditions, accepting without question that the bank vaults of the capitalists, where there is plenty of money, are sacrosanct private property. By the same token, they turn their back on the fight for black rights and the defense of immigrants, who have been first on the chopping block of capitalist austerity.

The bankruptcy of capitalism now on naked display poses the very survival of the working class. To combat unemployment, it is necessary to shorten the workweek at no loss in pay and spread the available work around, as part of the struggle for jobs for all. Wages must rise with prices to guard against the ravages of inflation. There must be a massive program of public works at union wages to rebuild the crumbling infrastructure and schools and to build decent public housing. To unmask the exploitation, robbery and fraud of the capitalist owners and the swindles of the banks, workers should demand that the capitalists open their books, making clear to all the squandering of human labor which is the result of capitalist anarchy and the naked pursuit of profits.

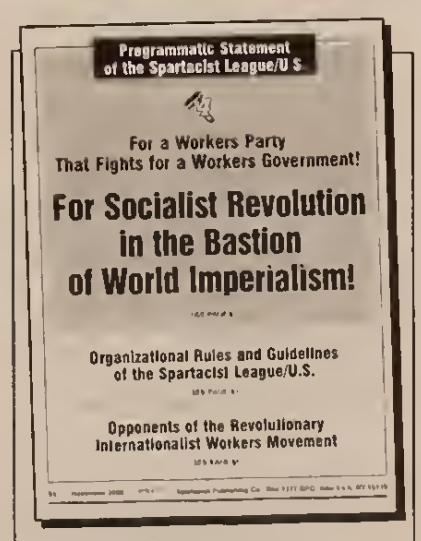
All must have full access to medical care at no cost. Benefits for the unemployed must be extended until they have jobs, with all pensions completely guaranteed by the government. Such demands, the elements of which were laid out in the 1938 Transitional Program, the founding document of the Trotskyist Fourth International, will not be granted by the rapacious capitalist rulers. The capitalist state exists to defend the rule and profits of the bourgeoisie. It cannot be reformed or wielded to serve the interests of working people. The catastrophe of joblessness, threatening the disintegration of the working class, can be effectively fought only by a workers movement led by those committed to the struggle for socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers government where those who labor rule.

If the unions are to be organizations of struggle by the working class against the ravages of capitalism, there must be a political struggle against the labor bureaucrats who subordinate the class interests of the proletariat to those of its exploiters and their political parties. The labor traitors have tied the hands of the unions for decades through their alliance with the capitalist Democratic Party. What is needed is to forge a class-struggle leadership of the unions that can arm the workers to carry out the necessary battles against American capitalism. This in turn will be part of building a multiracial revolutionary workers party dedicated to the overthrow of this decaying capitalist-imperialist order.

Down With the Racist War Against Immigrants and Blacks!

Over the past few decades, California has been a virtual petri dish for right-wing ballot initiatives particularly targeting immigrants and blacks—while also taking aim at others deemed "outcasts" and "deviants," such as gay people who want to get married. The passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 was the harbinger of a broader right-wing tax revolt across the country. This was codified at the federal level with the presidential election of former California governor Ronald Reagan in 1980, whose "supply side economics" slashed taxes for the rich and upper-income suburbanites while stealing money from welfare mothers and inner-city schoolchildren.

Prop. 13 was also the harbinger of a series of deeply reactionary propositions taking aim at immigrants, blacks and working people. Among these was 1994's Prop. 187, which cut off all education,



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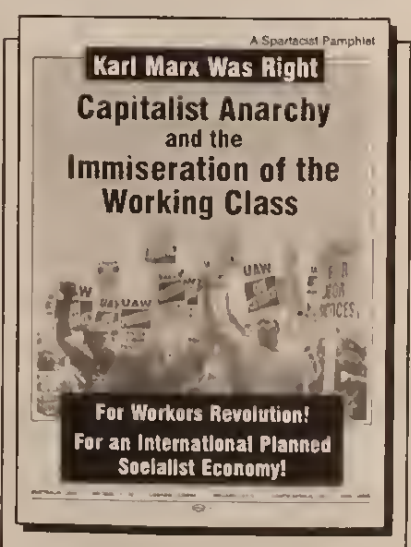

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health care and other social benefits for "illegal" immigrants (most of these provisions were later overturned by the courts). Two years later, the passage of Proposition 209 outlawed even token affirmative action programs that gave blacks and other minorities limited access to higher education and government jobs and contracts. The slashing of such social programs has been matched in inverse proportion by increasing state repression and terror aimed at containing the seething anger and discontent of those who have been cast on the scrapheap of American capitalism.

The U.S. leads the world in the number of people who are behind bars—many of them targets of the racist "war on drugs"—and California leads the nation. Since the early 1980s, the state's prison population has jumped from 20,000 to 167,000. A big boost came with the passage of the 1994 "three strikes you're out" Prop. 184 (heavily funded by the California prison guards association), which mandates life sentences for a third felony offense no matter how minor. An example is Curtis Wilkerson, who is now in jail for life for his "third strike"—stealing a pair of socks.

California's prisons are now so overcrowded that a federal three-judge panel recently ruled that they violated the constitutional amendment against "cruel and unusual punishment." In 2005, a U.S. district judge found that one California prisoner a week died due to lack of adequate medical facilities. But a budget-cutting proposal to cut money from prisons through the early release of 27,000 elderly and sick inmates to non-prison hospitals, and allowing other "nonviolent" inmates to serve their last year of time under house arrest, has provoked howls of protest from right-wing Republicans.

A 20 August column titled "Priority Test: Health Care or Prisons?" by *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof decries the fact that California spends over six times more locking up each prisoner in overflowing and decrepit jails than it does per child in the Oakland school district. Kristof asks, "Would we rather use scarce resources to educate children and heal the sick, or to imprison people because they used drugs or stole a pair of socks?" It is indeed a measure of the increasing depravity of American capitalism that it will spend exponentially more imprisoning people than educating them or providing even a modicum of health care to keep them alive. But it is a calculus based on what the U.S. bourgeoisie sees as necessary to preserve American capitalism.

California Department of Corrections

Overcrowded conditions at California State Prison—Los Angeles County, 2006.

When it comes to the education of those they exploit, the capitalist rulers expend only as much as they can realize back in profit. And if educating the sons and daughters of white workers has increasingly become an expendable overhead, the children of black people are deemed an ***expendable population*** by America's rulers. Once a reserve army of labor to be maintained, albeit minimally, for the American bourgeoisie today the black ghetto poor are not worth "wasting money" on to keep alive, much less educate. The American working class cannot liberate itself without at the same time leading the fight to smash the chains of black oppression.

For a Workers Government!

The budget-slashing offensive by California's Republican and Democratic Party rulers has provoked predictable cries from the reformists to "tax the rich." A 26 July article on the Web site of the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) opines that "the budget crisis would be relatively easy to solve under a different economic system." Leaving unnamed what such a system would be, the PSL goes on to offer its own accounting advice for resolving the budget crisis, "even under capitalism," through greater taxes on corporations and the rich as well as imposing a "moratorium" on debt service to the banks. They even go so far as to name the sums that could be saved through such endeavors. The aim of such reformist pipe dreams is to conceal the reality that the bourgeois state and its political representatives exist to defend capitalist rule and profit, not to provide for the well-being of the working class and the poor.

Not to be outdone, the International Socialist Organization came up with a scheme whereby Obama could preserve the military might of U.S. imperialism and still find lots of spare cash for social programs: "Cut the military budget in half, and the U.S. could create a generous social safety net and *still* be the largest military power in the world" (*Socialist Worker* online, 3 March)! It would he hard to find a more cringing statement of the reformists' fundamental faith in the capitalist state, to say nothing of social-patriotic chauvinism against the Iraqi, Afghan and other oppressed peoples of the world who are on the receiving end of U.S. imperialism's military might.

Like the trade-union bureaucrats, whom they serve as water boys, these putative "socialists" promote politics that are determined by what is practical and possible under capitalism. In opposition to the capitalists and their reformist agents, Trotsky argued:

> "If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish. 'Realizability' or 'unrealizability' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery."

America's capitalist rulers arrogantly presume they can get away with starving the poor, killing the sick and aged and further impoverishing working people and the oppressed without provoking any social protest. This calculation, which owes much to the role of the trade-union bureaucracy in enforcing class peace and suppressing labor struggle, is nonetheless foolish. While the capitalist rulers bray that Marxism has proved to be a "failed experiment," they cannot eliminate the class struggle, which is horn of the irreconcilable conflict of interests between labor and capital.

People cannot stand having no future for themselves or their children, or being oppressed like slaves, with poverty, disease and homelessness threatening millions. There is tremendous pressure building at the base of this society, which can and will explode. Harnessing and directing this anger toward the eradication of a system based on exploitation and rooted in racial oppression is, at bottom, a question of leadership. The key to unlocking the social power that lies in the hands of the multiracial working class is to break the chains forged by the trade-union misleaders that have shackled labor to its exploiters. To fight the economic catastrophe threatening the working class and the increasingly vicious oppression of blacks and immigrants requires forging a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Such a party would not only fight to defend the interests of workers, blacks, immigrants and others against the ravages of capitalism, but would lead the struggle to expropriate the parasitic bourgeoisie through socialist revolution and the establishment of a workers government where those who labor rule.■

Wilson/NY Times

Homeless encampment: A modern "Hooverville" in Fresno rail yard in March.

SF8...

(continued from page 3)

to charges of conspiracy to commit voluntary manslaughter. Herman Bell pled guilty to lesser charges of voluntary manslaughter. Under the terms of these plea deals, Bell and Muntaqim were given no additional jail time, would not testify against any other of the SF8 and their pleas could not be used as evidence against the others. This would return them to prisons in New York where they are serving 25-to-life sentences on separate charges of killing two NYPD cops in 1971. The two men, together with Albert "Nuh" Washington, who has died, were known as the "New York 3."

Central to the New York 3's 1975 frame-up conviction was the coerced testimony of torture victim Ruben Scott, who subsequently recanted. Long-suppressed documents showed that two women witnesses were jailed for 13 months and threatened with the loss of custody of their children in order to coerce their testimony. That testimony was rewarded by not only allowing them custody of their children, but also with a rent-free apartment and a $150 a week stipend for several years. During the 1980s, it was revealed that the FBI had concealed significant exculpatory evidence, including a ballistics report that proved the key piece of "physical evidence" at trial—a .45 calibre pistol in Bell's possession at the time of his arrest—was not the weapon used to kill the cops (see *The COINTELPRO Papers*, Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall [1990]).

Referring to the 1973 arrests and torture of the three Panthers used to go after the SF8, former Black Panther and death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal stated (www.prisonradio.org, 23 May 2006): "Long before the words Guantánamo and Abu Ghraib entered common American usage as reference points for government torture, there were several young black men who knew something about the subject." He added, "The roots of Guantánamo, of Abu Ghraih, of Bagram Air Force Base, of U.S. secret torture chambers operating all around the world, are deep in American life, and its long war against Black life and liberation."

Indeed, the relentless persecution of these men is among the many atrocities committed under the government's decades-long COINTELPRO operations. In 1968, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover vowed, "The Negro youth and moderate[s] must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teachings, they will be dead revolutionaries." In order to persecute or outright kill Black Panthers, the FBI revived COINTELPRO, a counterintelligence program originally implemented in 1956 against the Communist Party. The government then unleashed the most savage and systematic campaign of domestic racist state terror in modern American history: some 233 of 295 COINTELPRO actions against black organizations took place against the Panthers. Thirty-eight Panthers were killed and hundreds more railroaded into prison hellholes for scores of years. Among those still in America's dungeons are Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ed Poindexter, Mondo we Langa, Sundiata Acoli, Assata Shakur, who fled the country in 1979, is living in exile in Cuba. Many others died behind prison walls. Geronimo ji Jaga (Pratt) spent 27 years behind bars for a murder the FBI and California state officials knew he did not commit. In that case, foreshadowing the frame-up of the SF8, the FBI claimed to have "lost" wiretaps proving that Geronimo was at an Oakland Panther meeting, 400 miles away from L.A. where and when the murder was committed. Geronimo was finally released in 1997 when an Orange County Superior Court judge ruled that he had been denied a fair trial due to the prosecution's withholding of vital evidence from the defense.

As we wrote over 30 years ago: "Unlike various New-Left-liberal guilt-tripping groups like the International Socialists and the Revolutionary Union [forerunner of the Revolutionary Communist Party], the Spartacist League never hid criticisms of the Panthers' nationalist ideology and adventurist tactics. We attempted to win these potentially valuable cadre through political struggle to a working-class orientation as the only road to black liberation. At the same time we have always stood in the forefront of those forces fighting for the freedom of Black Panther Party political prisoners victimized by the racist capitalist state" (*WV* No. 88, 5 December 1975). We continue to do so today—from our 22-year fight for Mumia Abu-Jamal's freedom to our active participation in the struggle to free the SF8. We know well that the bourgeoisie does not grant general amnesties in the class war; freedom for all class-war prisoners can be won only as part of the struggle for workers revolution to overthrow this brutal racist capitalist system. ***Drop the charges against Francisco Torres now! Free Jalil Muntaqim and Herman Bell!***■

China...

(continued from page 12)

be based on collectivized property. In fact, the *non*-capitalist character of China has been clearly demonstrated during the current severe global economic downturn.

To see this, one can compare the effects of the economic stimulus programs in the U.S. and China. Despite the $800 billion stimulus package enacted by the Democratic administration of Barack Obama, output and employment have continued to fall. The gross domestic product is nearly 4 percent below what it was a year ago, while industrial production has been cut by 13.6 percent over the same period. Official optimism that the economy is bottoming out, propagated by the Obama White House, points to the fact that in July employers eliminated "only" a quarter of a million jobs, somewhat less than the average job loss over the previous several months.

By contrast, China's stimulus program, centered on investment in infrastructure by state-owned enterprises and government bodies and expanding loans by state-controlled banks, has effectively offset the massive decline in export earnings. The annual rate of growth of gross domestic product increased to 8 percent in the second quarter up from 6 percent in the previous quarter. Richard McGregor, a China watcher for the London *Financial Times* (9 August), commented: "Beijing has managed to pull the Chinese economy out of a ditch with a massive fiscal and monetary stimulus."

Nonetheless, the global economic downturn has sharply worsened conditions for those migrant workers from the countryside who have toiled in factories owned by foreign and offshore Chinese capitalists producing light manufactures for export. Many have had to return to their villages, at least temporarily, including Uighurs from Xinjiang. Impoverished Uighur and also Han youth in the villages and cities of Xinjiang cannot now improve their conditions by securing employment in the capitalist-owned factories producing for export. In this sense, the basic contradictions of the world capitalist system and the accommodation to that system by the Beijing Stalinist regime have aggravated the national conflict between Uighurs and Han Chinese in Xinjiang.

In their own way, the imperialist bourgeoisies recognize that China continues to embody the social and national gains of the 1949 Revolution. The country is not theirs as it was in the past. The ultimate goal of the U.S., European and Japanese imperialist powers is to restore capitalism in China and once again reduce the country to semicolonial subjugation. In pursuing that goal, the imperialists have encouraged and supported reactionary nationalist forces linked to religion among the non-Han peoples—Tibetans, Uighurs—in the western borderlands of China. Thus the national conflict between Uighurs and Han in Xinjiang must be viewed within the broad framework of imperialist hostility to the Chinese deformed workers state.

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Sabrie/NY Times

In the wake of communal violence, Uighurs and Han Chinese in mixed neighborhood sign up for joint self-defense group.

Stalinist Misrule and the National Conflict in Xinjiang

The specific character of the national question in Xinjiang has significantly changed as a consequence of developments since the 1949 Revolution. At that time, 75 percent of the region's population were Uighurs, less than 7 percent were Han Chinese. Today, of the 21 million people in Xinjiang, 45 percent are Uighurs and 40 percent are Han. Moreover, the Han population is concentrated in the cities and even in 1949 made up a majority in Urumqi, the provincial capital.

Initially, the migration of Han into the relatively impoverished backwater province of Xinjiang resulted from deliberate government policy and special incentives. However, for the past decade or so, Xinjiang had experienced an economic boom, even by China's standards, centrally based on the exploitation and development of its oil and natural gas fields. According to official figures, the region's gross domestic product doubled between 2004 and 2008 from $28 billion to $60 billion. This boom has attracted Han Chinese of all classes, from capitalist entrepreneurs to unskilled laborers, pursuing their own economic interests. That is, the changing demographics are not solely determined by the policies and intent of the CCP regime, though Uighurs complain that they continue to be excluded even from unskilled work.

At the same time, the pervasive use of market relations in the economy and the large private sector have increased the gap between the growing number of Han Chinese and the indigenous peoples in the country's western borderlands. Especially in private enterprises, but also in the state sector, hiring often is based on nepotism, other personal connections or outright discrimination in favor of Han Chinese. But even if competition in the labor market were decided solely by individual capacity, Han Chinese would still have an advantage over Uighurs; they are far more skilled and literate, in particular fluent in Mandarin, China's *lingua franca*.

Thus, the past decade's economic boom in Xinjiang appears to have aggravated rather than lessened Uighur resentment against Han Chinese as a socially privileged and politically dominant nationality. Two China correspondents for the London *Financial Times* (7 July) report:

> "The redevelopment of old towns and the influx of richer Han Chinese radically changed local economic structures, costing many Uighurs their traditional jobs. . .
> "This has happened while Xinjiang's economy has been growing at more than 11 per cent a year for the past six years, above the national average. The wealth created by this rapid growth has been concentrated in the pockets of new immigrants, increasing the gap between rich and poor, Han and Uighur, some locals complain."

Enmity between Uighurs and Han Chinese has centuries-old, historical roots. But that enmity has been intensified by the effects of Stalinist bureaucratic misrule, particularly in the last two decades. At the same time, it is important to recognize that Uighurs, like other workers and rural toilers throughout China, have benefited enormously from the progressive social and economic development of the post-1949 People's Republic. Since the Revolution, infant mortality in Xinjiang has continually declined while life expectancy, less than 30 years in 1949, rose to 67 years by 2000.

However, today's young Uighur men and women are much less likely to compare their conditions of life to those of their parents and grandparents than to those of the Han newcomers. And by those standards they are clearly disadvantaged. To be sure, the Stalinist regime has made an effort to recruit more Uighurs and other national minorities into the higher reaches of the social order. Thus Uighur students are given additional points on the standardized examinations that are a screening mechanism for admission to university. But such measures have a tokenistic character given the reality that the mass of Uighurs are on the bottom of a newly reconfigured society in their own homelands.

The Chinese Stalinist leaders, who strive above all to maintain social "order," recognized the danger to themselves in the growing hostility of the poorer Uighurs toward the better-off Han. But instead of moving to raise the Uighur populace to the level of the Han *within* Xinjiang, the CCP regime had recourse to the safety valve of internal migration to the factories and construction sites of coastal China.

Beginning in 2002, the government instituted a labor export program for Uighur youth from low-income families. That program offered substantial advantages for those participating in it: incomes two or three times what they could earn at home, training in modern industrial equipment, Mandarin-language classes and free medical care. But state coercion in the form of stiff fines also was used against those Uighurs who, despite such material incentives, refused to leave their homes to work in strange cities thousands of miles away.

An estimated 1.5 million people from Xinjiang, mainly Uighurs, work elsewhere in China. But that safety valve is now being shut off by the effects of the global capitalist downturn. Reports indicate that both Uighur and Han perpetrators and victims of last month's riots in Urumqi were mostly unemployed or seasonal migrant workers.

What then is to be done? A workers and peasants government in China, issuing out of a proletarian political revolution, would establish a rationally planned and centrally managed economy based on state-owned enterprises. (This would not preclude the use of market mechanisms for certain purposes nor a limited role for the private, including foreign-owned, sector.) Only such a system would be able to narrow the present and widening socio-economic gap between Uighurs and Han in Xinjiang. What is required is expending and directing sufficient resources to educate and train Uighurs in the use of modern industrial technology on the same footing as Han Chinese. In the final analysis, however, to achieve a level of material abundance for the benefit of all of China's peoples requires aid from a socialist Japan or a socialist America, underlining again the need for international proletarian revolution.

Key to achieving genuine national equality in Xinjiang is reversing the Stalinist policy of forced Sinification, in particular the effort to marginalize the Uighur language in favor of Mandarin. The CCP boss of Xinjiang, Wang Lequan, declared that minority languages like Uighur are "out of step with the 21st century" (*New York Times*, 10 July). Wang is here speaking the language of the Mandarinate of old imperial China translated into the Stalinist nationalism and Han chauvinism of today. Since 2002, Mandarin has been the only language used in courses at Xinjiang University for at least the first two years of course work. At the same time, children from lower-class Uighur families have had little opportunity to achieve fluency in Mandarin. Under a workers and peasants government, there would be genuine bilingualism at all levels of education from preschool to university. Uighurs would be able to use their own language as well as Mandarin in all economic and political institutions, whether dealing with factory managers or government officials.

Such a language policy is mandated by the principles of proletarian internationalism—i.e., equality of all peoples in all spheres of life. The example to which we look is that of the Bolshevik regime led by Lenin and Trotsky that issued out of the 1917 Russian Revolution. Tsarist Russia was aptly described by Lenin as a "prison house of peoples." Upon coming to power, the Bolsheviks implemented the policies for which they always fought: the equality of all peoples, ethnicities and languages, including the right of self-determination for the myriad nations

Riboud/Magnum

Peasant denounces landlord at People's Tribunal following 1949 Chinese Revolution.

oppressed under the tsarist empire.

In China, the Han majority comprises some 90 percent of the population. Only a Leninist-Trotskyist party committed to proletarian internationalism can effectively combat Han chauvinism, including by mobilizing the Han proletariat in the struggle for the equality of all of China's peoples. And only such a party can combat the efforts of reactionary Uighur nationalists and Islamicists, supported by the imperialists, to exploit the just grievances of the Uighur masses against Chinese Stalinist misrule for counterrevolutionary purposes.

World Uighur Congress: An Agency of Imperialism

There is historical irony and deep political significance in the fact that both Uighur Islamicists and the leading figure in the World Uighur Congress were originally sponsored and promoted by the Chinese Stalinist leadership. In the 1970s and '80s, China was engaged in a strategic alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union, a policy initiated by Mao Zedong. In the context of that reactionary alliance, the Beijing regime trained and dispatched religious-minded, young Uighur men (who were Sunni Muslims) to join the CIA-backed *mujahedin* cutthroats fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan.

Thus, the Chinese bureaucracy criminally bolstered American imperialism in weakening and undermining the Soviet Union, thereby furthering imperialism's counterrevolutionary drive against the USSR. We Trotskyists hailed the Red Army's intervention into Afghanistan, not only as an elementary expression of our unconditional military defense of the Soviet degenerated workers state but also as the only means for social progress to be realized in benighted Afghanistan, not least for its horribly oppressed women.

Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, the main body of militant Islamicists, represented by Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda, turned against their former U.S. masters. Similarly, Uighur jihadists who had fought in Afghanistan redirected their fire at the Chinese Communist government. Following the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, *Jane's Security News*, which is linked to British intelligence, commented in this regard: "Chinese strategy on this front [Afghanistan], however, had a negative fallout for Beijing as the returning Uighur jihadis fuelled the already-simmering insurgency for an independent Muslim Eastern Turkestan in Xinjiang."

Most of the Uighur jihadists did not, in fact, return to China. However, the exiled Islamicists may well have ties to small, shadowy Uighur terrorist groups like the East Turkestan Islamic Movement operating in Xinjiang. Indeed, the counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR has led to a resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism throughout Central Asia. For its part, the Chinese Stalinist government has signed on to the global "war on terror," again emboldening the imperialists in Washington, who are now seizing on the communal riots in Xinjiang to promote their counterrevolutionary aims against China.

Far more important than the Uighur Islamicist terrorist groups is the World Uighur Congress because of the support it receives from U.S. and also German imperialism. The WUC receives funding from the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, a notorious CIA conduit. The organization's leading light is one Rebiya Kadeer, who dubs herself "the Mother of the Uighur nation." Kadeer began her career in China as a successful and wealthy capitalist, becoming a member of the National People's Congress, the rubber-stamp parliamentary body of the CCP regime. However, in 1997 this poster girl for China's new capitalist class fell from political grace after her husband, who had fled to the U.S., made offensive broadcasts over the official government Voice of America radio station. Two years later, she was arrested and charged with "providing secret information to foreigners" as she prepared to meet a delegation of U.S. Congressional staff. She was imprisoned until 2005. After her release, she moved to Washington, D.C., operating in the bastion of world imperialism. On more than one occasion, Kadeer was granted an audience by George W. Bush, who duly called her an "apostle of freedom."

The communalist riots in Urumqi occurred a little over a year after Tibetan mobs, led by Buddhist lamas, engaged in murderous attacks on Han Chinese residents in the capital, Lhasa (see "Counterrevolutionary Riots in Tibet," *WV* No. 911, 28 March 2008). Much of the Western bourgeois media has drawn a parallel between the two events, while hypocritically condemning the Chinese Communists for their brutality toward the country's national minorities.

There are similarities but also important differences between the anti-Han riots in Tibet last year and last month's communal violence in Xinjiang. The similarity lies in the reactionary, imperialist-backed nature of the exiled forces that claim to represent the Tibetan and Uighur peoples. The difference lies in the actual influence these forces exercise on the ground in the borderlands of western China.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 after the suppression of a lama/aristocrat uprising organized and armed by the CIA. Since then he has been elevated, so to speak, by his imperialist masters as the supreme incarnation of opposition to the Chinese Communist government. The Dalai Lama is a political personage of some importance on the international scene. The WUC's Rebiya Kadeer has made every effort to identify herself and her cause with Tibet's "living god," who contributed a brief introduction to her autobiography. Nonetheless, prior to last month's communal violence in Xinjiang, few people paid attention to Kadeer and her cohorts except for their CIA handlers.

In Tibet, the effect of the CCP regime's policies has been to reconstitute a numerically large and relatively wealthy Buddhist priest caste. The lamas are in the forefront of both internal reaction and imperialist provocations, such as last year's riots. By contrast, Beijing's policy in Xinjiang has been to suppress the emergence of a socially and politically influential Islamic clerical caste. Mosques must be registered with the state and imams require government approval. There does not now exist an organized network of Islamic clerics that could act as an effective link between the imperialist enemies of the People's Republic of China and the disaffected Uighur masses. On the available evidence, what happened in Urumqi last month was mainly a spontaneous eruption of ethnic hatred, fueled by relative economic deprivation, on the part of Uighurs involved.

Corbis

Workers in state-owned wind turbine factory in Urumqi. The core sectors of the Chinese economy remain collectivized.

Reuters

World Uighur Congress head Rebiya Kadeer (left) at press conference in Washington, D.C., with Republican Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (center) and Democrat William Delahunt, July 10.

Reformists and the Xinjiang Riots

Joining the imperialist drive for the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Chinese deformed workers state are reformist "socialists" such as the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the U.S. The ISO claims China has never been a workers state but has been "state capitalist" since 1949. This "theory," which they also applied to the former Soviet Union, is a fig leaf for decades of anti-Communist practice on behalf of imperialism. The ISO howled alongside the imperialists against the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan. When Soviet forces pulled out of Afghanistan in 1988-89, in a futile attempt by the Kremlin bureaucracy to appease the imperialists, the ISO gloated: "We welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs" (*Socialist Worker*, May 1988). Three years later, the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the ISO's former parent group, exulted: "Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991).

More recently, in an article titled "The Changing Shape of Struggle in China" (*Socialist Worker* online, 9 July), the ISO painted the horrific communal bloodletting in Xinjiang as "class-infused protests," grotesquely enthusing that "the Urumqi revolt confirms that grassroots struggle continues to erupt on an expanding scale."

On the other side of the reformist spectrum is the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL). A 24 July article on its Web site, "Behind the Urumqui Riots in China," while rightly denouncing the imperialists and their media for seizing on the riots in Urumqi, is essentially an apologia for the Chinese bureaucracy. Ever so gingerly, the PSL declares that "relations between the Han Chinese and Uyghur people are not perfectly harmonious." While noting that the CCP's "market reforms" have led to "nationalistic rivalries," the PSL disappears any hint of Han chauvinism on the part of the Chinese bureaucracy. Indeed, it is to the Stalinist bureaucracy that the PSL looks as the key barrier to counterrevolution, writing in an earlier article (10 February): "The CCP government, in spite all of its contradictions, remains the most important obstacle to the return of China to its previous state of semi-colonial slavery."

In reality, the continued rule of the CCP undermines defense of proletarian state power in China. Contrary to the PSL's claims, the bureaucracy continues to preserve state property not out of a subjective identification with socialism but, as Trotsky wrote in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) in regard to the Soviet Union, "only to the extent that it fears the proletariat"—i.e., to protect its privileged position as a parasitic caste atop the workers state.

For International Proletarian Revolution!

The CCP regime denounces the World Uighur Congress as "separatist." Actually, Kadeer & Co. do not now openly call to detach Xinjiang from China and establish an independent state, though that is manifestly what they're aiming for. The Uighur jihadists do call for an independent "Islamic East Turkestan." As proletarian internationalists, we do not consider the present state boundaries of China to be sacrosanct. But all of the forces advocating or supporting an independent Xinjiang today are in the camp of capitalist counterrevolution. Moreover, the demand for an independent Xinjiang, even if couched in the most "democratic" language, would be viewed by everyone in the region as a program to drive out the Han people.

One cannot envision a progressive solution to the national conflict in Xinjiang except in the context of a proletarian political revolution throughout China. This would open up historical possibilities that do not now exist: regional autonomy in some form, even an independent state allied to China.

The Chinese Stalinist regime of Hu Jintao declares a "harmonious society" to be the goal of its policies and practices. It is a fundamental premise of Marxism that a harmonious society can be achieved only through overcoming economic scarcity leading to material abundance. Despite China's rapid economic growth since the 1949 Revolution, it is still a relatively poor country by international standards. Per capita gross domestic product is one-tenth that of the United States and one-seventh that of Japan.

Ultimately, the survival and advancement of China's revolutionary gains hinge on the fight for socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries of Japan, North America and West Europe, the only road toward the all-round modernization of China as part of an international planned economy. A proletarian political revolution producing a China of workers and peasants councils would be a beacon for the oppressed working masses of Asia and the entire world. That is the perspective of the International Communist League. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Defend Chinese Deformed Workers State!
For Workers Political Revolution!

Communal Violence in Xinjiang

AFP

Reuters

Ethnic conflict in Xinjiang, July: Injured Han Chinese women in hospital (left); Uighurs behind roadblock in their neighborhood (right). Below: Chinese troops on a main street in downtown Urumqi.

AFP

Early last month a violent national conflict erupted in Urumqi, the provincial capital of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in western China. It began on July 5 when hundreds of Uighurs—a Turkic-speaking, traditionally Islamic people—went on a murderous rampage against their Han Chinese neighbors. Han mobs then retaliated in kind. The Chinese government now sets the number killed at 197, most of them Han Chinese, while some 1,600 were injured. To halt the interethnic bloodletting the government authorities utilized massive police force with 20,000 troops patrolling both Han and Uighur neighborhoods.

From the outset the Beijing regime has claimed, without convincing evidence, that the riots in Urumqi were masterminded by the anti-Chinese nationalists of the World Uighur Congress (WUC), an imperialist-sponsored group based mainly in the U.S. and Germany. Needless to say, the WUC presents a completely different picture from that of the Chinese government of the events leading to the riots. It contends that on July 5, a peaceful protest by Uighurs, mainly university students, was set upon by the police who opened fire on the demonstrators without any provocation. For its part, the Chinese government says that the repressive measures it took were a response to, not the cause of, the violence. We are quite distant from the situation, and each source—whether it's the Chinese government, the WUC or the imperialist media—has its own motive in presenting what happened. What is clear is that however the events on July 5 may have begun, they soon degenerated into communalist violence. Even the London *Economist* (11 July), a house organ for Anglo-American financiers, stated: "The violence in Xinjiang was crude, racist stuff on both sides, with the Han Chinese suffering the brunt of it."

The trigger for the riots in Urumqi was an event that occurred thousands of miles away in the southeastern Chinese coastal province of Guangdong. In late June, Uighur migrant workers living in a dormitory at a toy factory owned by Hong Kong capitalists were attacked by Han workers. At least two Uighur workers were killed and scores injured. The attack, which lasted for hours, was apparently provoked by a false rumor circulated by a disgruntled former worker that six Uighur men had raped two Han women. After news of what happened reached Xinjiang, Uighurs were enraged over inaction by Chinese authorities and demanded a full government investigation. These complaints against the Chinese government, which seem to be justified, in no way excuse the murderous rampage by Uighurs in Xinjiang against their Han neighbors.

Xinjiang, with its wealth of natural resources, especially large deposits of oil and natural gas, is of great strategic economic importance to China. The country's president, Hu Jintao, judged the communalist violence in Urumqi to be of such political importance and urgency that he cut short his participation in the G8 summit in Italy and returned to Beijing. What is the broad political significance of the national conflict between Uighurs and Han Chinese in Xinjiang? To answer that question it is necessary to understand the class nature of the Chinese state and its relationship to world imperialism.

The Class Character of the Chinese State

The 1949 Chinese Revolution, marked by the military victory of Mao Zedong's peasant-based armies over Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang, destroyed capitalist-landlord rule and liberated the country from imperialist subjugation. The revolution brought enormous social gains to China's workers, peasants and deeply oppressed women. However, the People's Republic of China, ruled by the Communist Party (CCP), emerged as—and continues to be—a bureaucratically deformed workers state patterned on the former Soviet Union under J. V. Stalin. A parasitic, nationalist bureaucratic caste rests atop a collectivized economy.

Like their Soviet Stalinist forebears, Mao and his successors, including the current regime, have preached the profoundly anti-Marxist notion that socialism could be built in a single country. Marxists define socialism as a classless, egalitarian society based on material abundance, which could be built only on the basis of international planning, crucially requiring the overthrow of capitalist rule in the advanced capitalist centers of North America, West Europe and Japan. In practice, the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country" has meant accommodation to world imperialism and opposition to the perspective of international workers revolution.

As Trotskyists, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution. In answer to the aspirations of the Chinese workers and rural toilers, and also national minorities like the Uighurs, for democratic rights and a government that represents their needs and interests, we stand for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and establish a government based on elected workers and peasant councils that is committed to revolutionary proletarian internationalism.

For the past several decades, the Beijing Stalinist regime has utilized extensive market mechanisms in the economy while encouraging large-scale investment by Western and Japanese corporations and the offshore Chinese bourgeoisie in Taiwan and Hong Kong. A sizable class of capitalist entrepreneurs—many of them former government functionaries and the children of current functionaries—has also developed on the mainland. As a consequence, there is now a widely held belief, across the entire political spectrum, that once-"Communist" China has become capitalist or is rapidly and irreversibly doing so. That belief is false. The core of the Chinese economy continues to

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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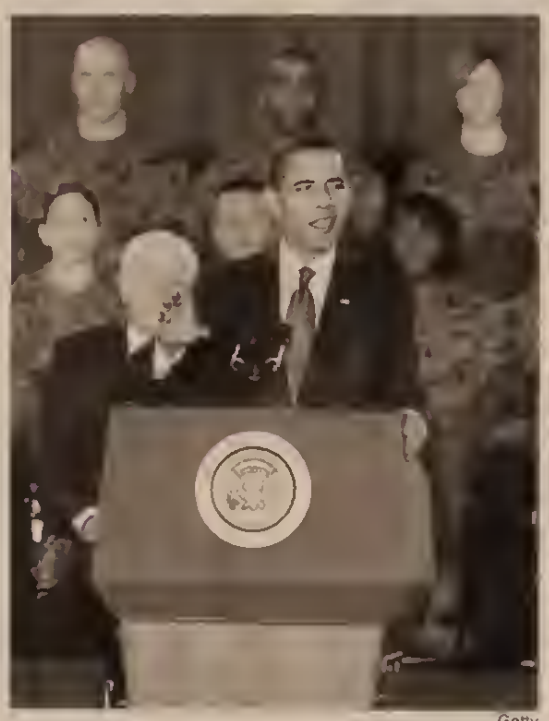
No. 942 | C-701 | 11 September 2009

All U.S./NATO Troops Out of Afghanistan, Iraq!

Down With Obama's War in Afghanistan!



Getty

AFP

President Barack Obama, shown addressing troops at North Carolina's Camp Lejeune this February, vows to reinforce imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. Right: Afghan security forces at site of September 4 U.S./NATO airstrike near Kunduz that killed some 90 people.

SEPTEMBER 6—The Afghan presidential elections held on August 20 were never meant to be anything but a "democratic" veneer for the American-led imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. But within days of the elections, even the veneer disappeared amid a welter of charges and countercharges of ballot stuffing and vote rigging. Whether current president Hamid Karzai manages to steal the elections outright or there is a runoff with his main challenger Abdullah Abdullah, the real rulers are the mass murderers in the White House and Pentagon. On September 4, a U.S./NATO airstrike near Kunduz killed some 90 people, the latest in ongoing airstrikes that have slaughtered thousands in Afghanistan and across the border in Pakistan.

The more significant fact overshadowing the elections is that the U.S./NATO occupiers have been losing ground militarily. The Pashtun-based Taliban insurgency now covers an estimated 40 percent of the country's districts. Southern Afghanistan is now largely outside government control, while major cities like Kabul and Jalalabad are being squeezed. Obama's troop "surge" has increased the fighting in southern Helmand province, a Taliban stronghold, with U.S. military casualties in July-August at their highest levels in eight years of war and occupation.

The brutal military occupation by U.S., British and other NATO forces, with its attendant atrocities, has fueled bitter resentment especially among the Pashtun peoples, the largest ethnic grouping, which makes up about 42 percent of the population. Days after a sustained U.S bombing attack on three villages in the western province of Farah on May 4-5 killed over 100 civilians, thousands of local villagers brought 15 newly discovered bodies to the house of the provincial governor, chanting, "Death to America" and "Death to the government." Not surprisingly, many Pashtuns have increasingly joined forces with the re-emergent Talihan and others, both in Afghanistan and on the other side of the Pakistan border, an artificial boundary that carves up ethnic groups. U.S. air attacks in Pakistan have increased markedly under the Obama administration.

Now the Obama administration is preparing for massive reinforcements, up to 45,000 more troops on top of the 68,000 already committed. Obama recently assigned Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, a "special ops" commander, to lead the U.S./NATO forces in Afghanistan. A 13 May *Washington Post* article described his "manhunter" credentials from commando operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan: "As commander of the military's secretive Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) for nearly five years starting in 2003, McChrystal masterminded a campaign to perfect the art of tracking down enemies, and then capturing or killing them." For the captured, the JSOC oversaw a special forces torture center named Camp Nama near the Baghdad airport.

With opposition to the Afghanistan occupation growing, Obama, echoing his predecessor George W. Bush, invokes the "war on terror," "national unity" and fear. Speaking to an audience of veterans on August 17, he declared: "This is not a war of choice. This is a war of necessity. Those who attacked America on 9/11 are plotting to do so again. If left unchecked, the Taliban insurgency will mean an even larger safe haven from which al-Qaeda would plot to kill more Americans."

Obama's speech had little effect on public sentiment, as recent polls show that a majority of Americans disapprove of the war. Indeed, with support for the Afghan war among his Democratic base dwindling, Obama has increasingly turned to Congressional Republicans for support.

As we warned during the election campaign, the Afghanistan occupation was "Obama's preferred theatre of imperialist carnage" ("Fight for a Revolutionary Workers Party!" *WV* No. 924, 7 November 2008). Obama repeatedly said as a candidate that he would divert (not eliminate) troops from Iraq to pursue the "good" war in Afghanistan. And he's kept his campaign promise. Unlike the reformist "socialists," who gave open or backhanded support to Obama, we oppose ***on principle*** any political support to bourgeois

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1979 Soviet Intervention Brought Social Progress

Planeta

Kabul University in 1980s: more than half of students were women.

Der Spiegel: Lynch Rope Journalism

Free Mumia Now!

Spartakist

KfsV, PDC's fraternal organization in Germany, during protest against visit by then-president Bush, July 2006. Banner reads: "Mobilize the Power of the Working Class: Freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, Now!"

We print below an article translated from Spartakist *No. 179 (September 2009) published by our comrades of the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands.*

SPARTAKIST

Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man, is a former Black Panther Party spokesman and a supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization. He was framed up, convicted and sentenced to death on false charges of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in December 1981. Mumia's life is in increased danger. On April 6 the U.S. Supreme Court summarily turned down his petition to overturn the frame-up conviction. And the court has yet to rule on the Philadelphia district attorney's appeal to reinstate the death sentence, which was overturned by U.S. District Court Judge William Yohn in 2001. Should the Supreme Court rule in favor of the D.A.'s appeal, it would place Mumia a big step closer to the death chamber.

Helping to soap the hangman's noose is *Der Spiegel*, whose 24 August issue includes the article "The Fires of Hell," a piece of smear job journalism aimed at preparing European "public opinion" for a death sentence. The article was promptly applauded by right-wing Philadelphia radio broadcaster Michael Smerconish as a potential "turning point" for the campaign to kill Mumia: "After almost three decades, Abu-Jamal is finally in danger of exhausting his time in the U.S. courts. Here's hoping a usually captive European audience has finished accommodating a police officer's murderer as well" (www.philly.com, 27 August).

Small wonder, since the *Spiegel* article retails a host of lies lifted from the pages of *Murdered by Mumia*, a book co-authored by Smerconish with Faulkner's widow Maureen. The Partisan Defense Committee Fact Sheet pamphlet *Murdered by Mumia: Big Lies in the Service of Legal Lynching*, is a detailed refutation of this tract. The PDC Fact Sheet exposes as myth the claims which *Spiegel* regurgitates as "evidence" to paint Mumia as a "cop killer." Thus the *Spiegel* smear job cites as irrefutable evidence the testimony of prosecution "eyewitness" Robert Chobert, who testified that he saw Mumia shoot Faulkner. But as exposed in the Fact Sheet, in 1995 Chobert admitted that he never saw the shooting. Additionally, he had not parked his taxi behind Faulkner's police car, as he claimed: photos of the scene taken that night demonstrate this. Chobert, who had been driving with a suspended license for having been hired to throw a Molotov cocktail into a school, later changed his story several times, admitting in 1995 that he was secretly granted favors by the prosecution in exchange for his testimony during the 1982 trial.

Our comrades of the PDC have been fighting for more than 20 years on Mumia's behalf, including by uncovering evidence of his innocence that refutes the police and prosecution lies and exposes the depth of this racist frame-up. The pamphlet *The Fight to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal*, published in German by the Komitee für soziale Verteidigung, is a comprehensive exposure of the frame-up. It includes sworn statements by Mumia and his brother William Cook exposing as a lie *Spiegel*'s claim that Mumia "never told the judges what happened in that night." In fact, one judge after another has refused to even consider these statements or the mountain of evidence of Mumia's innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he and not Mumia killed Officer Faulkner.

For years, reformists and liberals have subordinated the fight for Mumia's freedom to faith in the capitalist courts and appeals for a "new," "fair" trial, downplaying or rejecting outright the massive, overwhelming evidence of the state frame-up. They raised the banner "Obama & Holder/We Need You Now!/Free Mumia" at the July convention of the black civil rights organization NAACP in a shameless appeal to the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism. A petition to Obama's top cop, Attorney General Eric Holder, was issued by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and others in the U.S. Appeals to Obama are all the more grotesque in the face of Obama's support of the death penalty. Smerconish regards Obama as an ally in his campaign against Mumia. Following an interview in which Smerconish questioned Obama about Mumia's case, Smerconish became one of many Republicans who endorsed the Obama campaign. As recounted in Smerconish's 20 August *Philadelphia Daily News* op-ed article, Obama said he wasn't familiar with the details: "'So let me just lay out a very clear principle: In my mind, if somebody killed a police officer, they deserve the death penalty or life in prison,' he told me. Amen to that."

Mumia's case goes to the core of the racist subjugation of black people, which is fundamental to the maintenance of American capitalism. The whole frame-up underlines that the fight for Mumia's freedom must be based on a class-struggle opposition to the racist U.S. capitalist system. *Free Mumia now! Dawn with the racist death penalty!*■

TROTSKY

LENIN

Slavery and the Origin of the Race Ideology

Veteran American Trotskyist Richard Fraser developed the materialist approach to the black question in the 1950s in a series of articles and lectures for internal discussion in the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party. The ideology of race is a socially derived category used to justify the system of black chattel slavery in the American South, and black oppression continued as a bedrock of American capitalism even after the Civil War smashed the slavocracy. Fraser advanced the program of revolutionary integrationism: a proletarian-centered struggle against every manifestation of racial oppression based on the understanding that the complete integration and equality of black people can be realized only in an egalitarian socialist society. This means not liberal nostrums of reform, but proletarian socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist system and eliminate the basis of racial and class oppression. The excerpts below are from an unpublished manuscript in the collection of the Prometheus Research Library that Fraser was working on at the time of his death in 1988.

Race is a social relationship between people recognizably different in skin color. Recognizability is a necessary element of the relation, but the social aspects of prejudice, exploitation and segregation are the things race is really about. Race has no legitimacy as a biological division of mankind.

Race relations today are a residue of relations between white masters and black slaves. The fact that slaves were black and masters were white was an accident of history. Light skinned Europeans enslaved dark skinned Africans. Europeans had learned about gunpowder from the Chinese and had guns. The Africans didn't. Skin color was a fact of life that differed between these people. That difference had an ancient and interesting origin, but did not have anything to do with the ability of Europeans to enslave Africans....

The basic change in race ideology that took place at the end of the eighteenth century was to transform the slave who was socially inferior by virtue of enslavement, and was incidentally black, into a person who was inferior because he was black and hence only fitted for slavery....

Why, after three hundred years of slavery did a race theory finally appear? Several things came together. The French Revolution did not just declare that people had personal rights by nature, but that reason ought to hold sway over blind faith. The Age of Reason had been born, and a scientific, and secular, rationale was needed to justify the enslavement of people.

Furthermore, opposition to slavery was beginning to occur. Slave revolts began to give slave masters cause for concern, not to speak of the nascent abolitionist movement. The hypocrisy of the U.S. Constitution which was based on the ideal of human liberty, but recognized the legitimacy of slavery, could be counteracted by the contention that slaves were not quite human, but some sort of inferior race. This was the social basis for the appearance of race ideology as a scientific discipline.

—Richard Fraser, *The Struggle Against Slavery in the United States*

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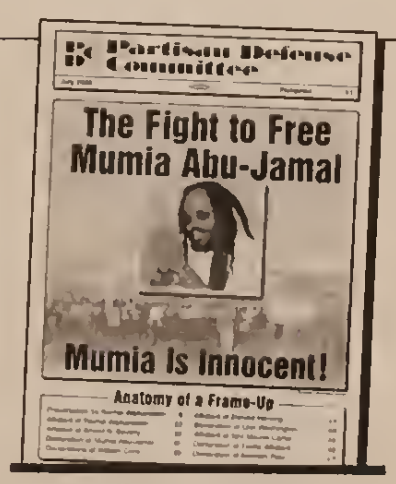

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Remember Hurricane Katrina, Racist Atrocity

Hurricane Katrina in August/September 2005 was a natural disaster. But the government's response was a man-made disaster, leaving in its wake a catastrophic human toll. Who can forget the television images of desperate survivors on the roofs of their homes; of hungry, thirsty and frightened people pleading for help at the squalid, sweltering Superdome; of the armed forces of the state mobilized to terrorize the population; of the criminal actions (and inaction) by all levels of government, by both parties of capitalism—the Republicans in the White House, the Democrats at the state and local levels.

Four years on, Panglossian reportage in the bourgeois press abounds, with headlines like that of the *New York Times* (14 July): "A Sustainable New Orleans Slowly Rises in Katrina's Wake." For some privileged layers of that city, this rings true; for the black, poor and working-class victims reality is something else altogether. To take one example, public housing projects, which served a largely black population, have been closed. A recent letter by a longtime *Workers Vanguard* reader in New Orleans reports:

"There is still a repopulation curve of the richest and the whitest returning first, the poorest and blackest last. The housing project residents never made it back at all. After the storm, all the projects were barricaded and barred at great expense to keep the residents from returning, even projects that never flooded. HANO [Housing Authority of New Orleans], HUD, and a unanimous City Council colluded to demolish 4,500 units.... 'Urban renewal is Negro removal,' an aphorism from the '60s, is writ large in New Orleans today....

"Beyond the Industrial Canal stretches the vast expanse of the mostly black New Orleans East and the entirely black Ninth Ward. Repopulation there is small and is discouraged by official neglect. There are virtually no hospitals, police or fire stations, post offices, grocery stores, schools, libraries, playgrounds, and none are planned....

"The national press has painted a cheerful picture about New Orleans' recovery. One reason is the current demolition-and-construction boomlet, which is due to federal disaster dollars finally coming through the pipeline—four years down the road. The big construction companies subcontract out to many small-company bosses who in turn pick up mostly Hispanic day laborers at Home Depot or Lowe's. The laborers have no union, no benefits, no health insurance, often no place to stay, and no protection from rampant wage theft. The New Orleans City Council recently defeated a proposal to make wage theft by contractors a crime. A north shore cop was arrested for repeatedly stopping Hispanic laborers on the Interstate and robbing them of their cash at gunpoint and in uniform. He was fired but received no jail time and made no restitution to the victims. A New Orleans cop was busted for the same thing.

"Another reason for the cheery accounts in the national press about the city's recovery is that New Orleans now 'leads the nation in charter schools'...which means leading the nation in union-busting. After the longshoremen, the majority black teachers union was the largest local labor union. The first thing black Democratic mayor Ray Nagin did when the flood waters were drained was to fire all 8,000 school employees and declare the public schools closed for two academic years. Charter schools soon filled the void as families returned. The charters cherry-picked the healthiest, highest performing children, turning away those with poor test scores, 'behavior problems' or disabilities. They hired the whitest, youngest teachers who would work for the least money, and 'Teach for America' was right there with a ready supply. The charter schools are now mainly staffed by 22-year-olds who stay for exactly two years and leave. They make so little that craigslist.org is full of housing-wanted ads from them saying they can't pay over $400 per person in rent. They also have pitiful benefits. One young teacher was shot attempting to stop a carjacking. After reaching the $100,000 limit to his health insurance—that's a few days in the hospital today—his fellow teachers held a benefit to raise money for his hospital bill."

AFP

Desperate Katrina victims trying to escape hellish conditions in Superdome in New Orleans, September 2005.

This is but a snapshot of the devastation wrought against the working people of this city. And it continues under the Democratic Party administration of Barack Obama. In keeping with his myth of a "post-racial" America, Obama declared about Hurricane Katrina that the government's "incompetence was color-blind." After Obama came into office, FEMA threatened to evict the thousands of Katrina victims who are still holed up in stultifying trailers with dangerously high levels of formaldehyde, which poses an increased risk of cancer. This summer, the administration announced a "turn-around," offering to sell the trailers for $5. Far from being an act of magnanimity, this allows the government to wash its hands of any responsibility for the desperately poor residents, leaving them to foot the bill for all upkeep and repairs, including even the removal of the trailers if they are ever able to move back into their original homes.

Justice for the victims of Katrina will come only with the destruction of this racist capitalist system and the establishment of the rule of the working class. ***The workers movement should never forget this racist atrocity.*** Toward this end, we print below excerpts from "New Orleans: Racist Atrocity," published in *WV* No. 854, 16 September 2005.

* * *

New Orleans, one of the oldest, most cultured, most complex of American cities, remains devastated, its residents dispersed, its dead still uncounted and unburied. Whole communities along the Gulf Coast have simply disappeared. Hurricane Katrina has ripped away the tattered facade of the U.S. government as "of the people, by the people, for the people," exposing the racism, venality, ruling-class arrogance and utter ineptitude of the White House gang. A wave of revulsion has swept the country at the government's response to the disaster, undercutting the post-September 11 "national unity" hysteria that had already taken a beating over the debacle in Iraq. Sections of the ruling class itself are hammering at Bush, not least for damaging the image of the "world's only superpower" internationally.

Now they are even trying to forbid news media from showing the dead, who are still shamefully left to lie in the open while troops patrol the streets....

They want to hide the evidence of their crimes against the people of New Orleans. But what is starkly exposed is the raw reality of race and class in capitalist America....

But it's not just Bush and the Republicans. The other capitalist party, the Democrats, is also directly responsible for

continued on page 6

WV Photo

Demonstrators push past security guards to reclaim their homes at St. Bernard public housing project, April 2006.

Workers Vanguard Subscription Drive

August 20 to October 7

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Bay Area	550	189	34%
Chicago	425	150	35%
Los Angeles	350	73.5	21%
New York	900	258	29%
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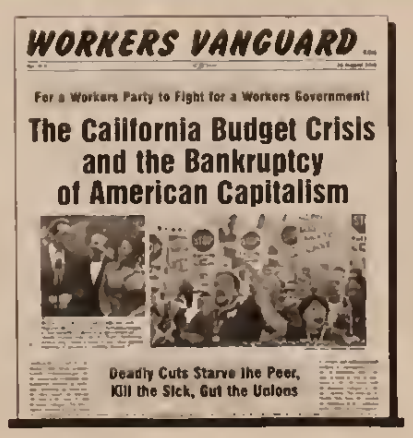

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Painting depicts Thomas Jefferson and others signing Declaration of Independence, 1776. Ideals of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" were belied by institution of slavery. Right: Jefferson with slave at Monticello.

SLAVERY AND THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

We print below, in slightly edited form, a presentation by Jacob Zorn to a Spartacist League educational in New York on 30 March 2008, the first of several classes on black history and the development of the American labor movement.

This is not going to be a history class of everything that happened from 1492 to 1860; the material is too immense. I want to focus on the salient political points for this period, and also to try to set up the next class, on the Civil War. We are historical materialists, and as such we say that black oppression—and we say this

PART ONE

often in *WV*—is not just a bunch of bad ideas but has a material, that is to say, a historical and class, basis. What I want to do in the class is explain the origins of this material basis. In the second class and in subsequent classes, this will be developed further. These are the three things I specifically want to drive home:

1. How slavery in the Americas was central to the development of capitalism, both on an international level and also here in the United States.
2. How elements of the contemporary black question, including the very concept of race, have their roots in the system of slavery.
3. How throughout every step of the development of the United States up through 1860 slavery was integral, from the colonial period, through the American war of independence, to the Constitution, and then culminating in the struggle that led up to the Civil War.

Marx and Primitive Capitalist Accumulation

I want to begin with what Marx calls the primitive accumulation of capital, which was discussed in one of the readings for this class, in the first volume of *Capital*. Marx has a very powerful quote in there: "In actual history, it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part." And that's kind of a summary of what I'm going to be talking about: enslavement, robbery and murder.

I'm not going to go over much of the European background, although it's worth reviewing our pamphlet, *Enlightenment Rationalism and the Origins of Marxism* (1998), and also some of the articles we've written on the English Civil War, in addition to the *Capital* reading. Marx talks about the bloody origins of capitalism, and one of the key events was the enclosure acts that threw the peasantry off the land in England and Scotland in order to kind of kick-start capitalism. As Marx describes, in Europe this resulted both in a class that owned the means of production (because land became necessary as a means of production, for wool and other things) and also a class that owned nothing but its labor power. One result, necessary for the British colonization of North America, is that it created a large surplus of people in England who were subject to incredibly harsh punishment for very small crimes and for whom even colonial Virginia looked like a good escape.

Doubleday & Company

Slaughter of Pequot Indians, 1637. Of some 400 men, women and children, only four escaped alive.

Marx also talks about how the conquest of America, both North and South America and the Caribbean, was also key in the development of world capitalism. A key element of this was the dispossession of the indigenous population, a dispossession that was extremely violent and genocidal. If you want a taste of what this was like, you should read the writings of a Spanish priest by the name of Bartolomé de las Casas, which go into a lot of the gratuitous violence: about 95 percent of the pre-Colombian indigenous population was killed, perhaps 90 million people. But this early Spanish colonization, which was largely based on extracting gold and silver, fueled the development not only of Spanish but also of Dutch and English capitalism.

In North America, primitive capitalist accumulation meant not only dispossessing the indigenous population of the land, but also finding somebody to do the work, since in North America the English really didn't use the Indians as a labor force. A comrade brought to my attention a really good article in *WV* No. 581 (30 July 1993), "Genocide 'Made in USA'," that shows how the destruction of millions of people was key in the building of the American nation and the laying of the basis for the development of North American capitalism, and how it left a birthmark of racism on American capitalism from the get-go. But fundamentally the colonists in North America had the opposite problem from what the ruling class in Britain had: that is, there was an abundance of land but a shortage of people to work on it.

I want to make the point that a lot of the history of the Americas, especially here in the United States, tends to be focused on North America. But in the early years of colonization, the most desired area of the Americas was really the Caribbean, and it was much later that North America was colonized—and not only by the English: there were Spanish outposts (for example, St. Augustine, Florida, is the longest continuously settled city founded by Europeans in the current U.S.); there was French fur trading in Quebec and plantation agriculture in Louisiana; and also obviously the Dutch in New Jersey and New York, as well as the British in Virginia. There was a lot of competition among these different European powers, and we'll look especially at the rivalry of the Dutch and the English in terms of mercantilism.

Capitalism and Slavery

The readings talk about "chattel slavery." So what exactly is a chattel slave? It's not a concept that is used much today. "Chattel" means personal property. It's related to the word "cattle." And that is what slaves were; they were legally property that was sold and sometimes killed.

In the abstract, capitalism and slavery are fundamentally *counterposed* systems. One is based on free labor, and the other, on slave labor. Many of the advocates of capitalism opposed chattel slavery not only because they thought it was morally wrong, but also because they thought it was retrogressive. In *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Adam Smith wrote: "From the experience of all ages and nations, I believe, that the work done by freemen comes cheaper in the end than that performed by slaves" and "Whatever work he does beyond what is sufficient to purchase his own maintenance can be squeezed out of him by violence only, and not by any interest of his own."

Likewise, Alexander Hamilton, about whom we will be talking in a bit, said that slavery "relaxes the sinews of industry, clips the wings of commerce, and introduces misery and indigence in every shape" (quoted in James Oliver Horton, "Alexander Hamilton: Slavery and Race in a Revolutionary Generation," *New-York Journal of American History* [Spring 2004]). The piece that comrades read from Eugene Genovese, "The Slave South: An Interpretation," in *The Political Economy of Slavery* (1965) shows how, as a system, slavery was not capitalist; the slavocracy in the American South had its own productive system, its own values—or, to use Genovese's phrase, its own "civilization"—that derived from this non-bourgeois system. Slavery was fundamentally different from capitalism.

However, capitalism did not evolve in the abstract, but in the concrete, and slavery was fundamental to this development. Even though the slave system itself was not capitalist, slavery was central to the development of capitalism, both in the U.S. and internationally. Slavery was also a very profitable "industry"—for lack of a better term—in its own right, and international and American capitalists are indelibly stained with slavery.

Slavery, of course, is not only a precapitalist, but also a prefeudal system of production. There is a brilliant book by Karl

Kautsky called the *Foundations of Christianity* (1908) that, among other things, analyzes the importance of slavery in ancient Rome. Many of the elements of slavery in America are actually discussed by Kautsky in his treatment of plantation or mining slavery in Rome. He distinguishes, for example, between slavery for domestic use and slavery for profit, or commodity slavery. Obviously, commodity production in ancient Rome did not reach the level that it does under capitalism, but he made the point that when slaves make commodities that are then sold for the profit of their masters, the masters increase the exploitation of the slaves, which can only be done through immense oppression and brutality. Kautsky describes in detail a lot of the very brutal nature of Roman slavery, and he traces the decline of Rome to the contradictions in its slave system. For our purposes, one of the key elements, however, that is missing in Kautsky's piece is race. This is not an accident, because, as we'll see, Roman slavery was not a racial form of slavery.

With the destruction of the centralized Roman state in West Europe and the development of feudalism, slavery largely died out in medieval Europe. In 1086, for example, about 10 percent of the English population were slaves, but slavery was not central to medieval society. It was still practiced in the Mediterranean and parts of the Arab world, but in West Europe, feudalism was the dominant system, with serfdom the main productive form of labor.

The development of the English colonies in the Americas was concurrent with the development of capitalism in Britain—it was going on at the same time as the English Civil War, and there were various political intrigues over whom the colonies would support; there are cities in the United States named after both King Charles I and Cromwell, for example. Yet, the contradiction is that the rise of capitalism was accompanied with a new rise of slavery. Particularly in the English case, this was accompanied hy the creation of the world sugar market. Eating sugar is not based on slavery, hut the creation of the sugar market was.

I want to make some points about the development of slavery in the Americas. The first is that there is a prehistory: before the Spanish arrived in America, the Portuguese had begun using slave lahor on plantations in their island colonies off Africa, such as Madeira and the Azores. By 1452, the Pope had given the Portuguese the right to trade slaves, and in 1479 the Spanish crown gave Portugal a monopoly over the slave trade. By 1502, there is evidence of black slaves in the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo —that is to say 130 years before the English planters really began using slaves in the Caribbean and almost 200 years before slavery became entrenched in what would become the United States, in Virginia.

Slavery was crucial in almost every European colony throughout the Americas, and from the 16th century through the mid 19th century between 10 and 12 million Africans were "traded" as slaves. And it was extremely violent: depending on what century you're looking at, between 10 and 40 percent of the slaves died in transit. Ninety-five percent of these African slaves ended up in either the Caribbean or Latin America. North America received a relatively small fraction of all the African slaves, and this would have important ramifications on how slavery developed here.

Although the first slaves arrived in Virginia in 1619, for most of the 17th century the dominant labor system in Virginia was indentured servitude, which was a really nasty and brutal system. If it weren't for the slave system that came after, we would probably label indentured servitude one of the most hrutal systems known. Indentured servants agreed to work for a period of years, usually hetween five and seven, in exchange for transportation to America. They might be promised land at the end of their terms.

Schomburg Library

Left: Depiction of slave ship being loaded off coast of West Africa. Triangle Trade (below) was key to early development of capitalism.

Harper & Row

But to begin with, many indentured servants did not live to the end of their terms of service. While they were servants, they were subjected to extremely harsh discipline and punishment. They could be whipped, they could be beaten, they could be sold for the duration of their terms of service. They worked a lot harder than English peasants worked, and a lot of what we think of as unique to slavery was also present in various ways in indentured servitude. Many servants ran away.

By the mid-to-late 1600s, from the point of view of the planters, there developed several problems with indentured servitude. Servants were living longer. (Incidentally, one of the reasons that they began to live longer is that they began to drink more alcohol and not drink polluted water.) This meant that there began to develop a layer of unruly and dissatisfied ex-indentured servants, making Virginia more and more unstable. The danger of this was highlighted in 1676 with Bacon's Rebellion, when poor whites, mostly former indentured servants, and blacks united against the colonial government—in this case, to demand that the colonial government, among other things, drive out the Indians. But at the same time, fewer and fewer Europeans were willing to come to America as servants, partly because England was developing economically and partly because news got around England of what servitude was like, and it did not seem so attractive as it might have before.

So the fact that servants were living longer at the end of the 17th century made slavery (which was for life) more attractive, from the point of view of the planters, than servitude (which was usually for less than a decade). The planters in Virginia began to import slaves in larger and larger numbers. By the first decade of the 18th century, Virginia had been transformed from a society in which slaves were present into a society in which slavery was the central productive relationship, a slave society. This was not the only slave society in the Americas, but it was quite different from the slave societies in the Caribbean or Brazil.

When I was preparing this class, comrade Foster raised the interesting question: why did it take a revolution—the Civil War—to get rid of slavery in the United States, whereas in many other countries (not all of them, Haiti also obviously had a revolution) it did not take a revolution to get rid of slavery. There are various reasons, but one is that in the American South there were more slaveowners, many owning relatively few slaves, so that slavery was much more entrenched in colonial society and in later U.S. society. But importantly, from the point of view of the planters, slavery not only offered a source of labor, but also it offered a source of social stability, because with slavery came what veteran American Trotskyist Richard S. Fraser calls the concept of race.

The Race Concept

I'm not going to talk a lot about it because comrades are familiar, but there is no scientific basis for this concept of race. At the same time, various academics like to talk about race being "socially constructed." But even though race is not scientifically real, it is very, very real. It affects almost every aspect of one's life in this country, as we are reminded when we look at the newspaper every day. Marx, dealing with religion, wrote in *The German Ideology* (1846) that religion has no history—that is to say, no history independent of the social conditions that created it. So as Marxists, we understand that race is not just a bad idea, but one that developed out of a social system of production, a system of social relations, chattel slavery. This is explained very well in Fraser's "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution" [in *Prometheus Research Series* No. 3, August 1990, "In Memoriam: Richard S. Fraser"]. And for comrades who are interested in a more in-depth look at it, there is also a very good hook on the creation of the idea of race in America by Winthrop Jordan, called *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (1968), that goes back to the 16th century.

Chattel slavery is an inherently ***inhuman*** system. It involves degrading an entire group of people, putting them by definition outside the realm of hoth legal and moral protection. Chattel slaves are not legally human. As John Locke said in *Two Treatises of Government*, in 1690, slaves "are by the Right of Nature subjected to the Absolute Dominion and Arhitrary Power of their masters. These Men cannot in that state be considered as any part of *Civil Society*...." This would later be paraphrased in the Dred Scott decision that the hlack man had no rights that the white man was bound to respect. The concept of race served as a justification for slavery, conflating class status—slavery—with physical features: skin color. While there were some free blacks, even in the South, being black became equated with being a slave, that is, outside of the norms of human society. It's also useful to keep in mind that, of course, Africans at the time of slavery were not all of the same "race," either: there were very different societies in Africa, and if we could borrow a term, we could talk about "how Africans became black." Frederick Douglass has an important statement from when slavery was still in existence:

> "We are then a persecuted people, not because we are *colored*, but simply because that color has for a series of years been coupled in the public mind with the degradation of slavery and servitude."
>
> —"Prejudice Against Color" (1850), in *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, Vol. 2, ed. Philip S. Foner (1950)

This is the beginning of the ***material*** basis for the creation of a race-color caste in North America. And it's not an accident that laws banning interracial sex and marriage wefe passed in Virginia and Maryland at the same time that slavery became consolidated in the late 1600s and early 1700s.

The idea of race was defended using the so-called "Curse of Ham" from the Bible, which is the idea that blackness was a curse from God, going back to Noah. And there was in fact slavery in biblical times, and you can find lots of passages in the Bible about slavery, and these were used to justify American slavery. I don't want to defend the honor of the Old Testament, but nowhere is *racial* slavery mentioned in the Bible because it did not exist. Comrade Don pointed out a very interesting article by George Breitman that was puhlished in the Spring 1954 issue of *Fourth International*, called "When Anti-Negro Prejudice Began," that looks at the development of racism. And he shows that in the ancient world, there was no one group of people that was by definition enslaved, nor was slavery confined to one particular group. This idea of race did not make sense—it didn't exist. So, *racial slavery* did not exist.

I also want to make an aside that race in the U.S. is different than race in other places, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, which had different types of slavery. There's a myth in Brazil called "racial democracy," which is that there's really no such thing as race in Brazil; everybody's Brazilian. This is obviously untrue, but it does reflect the fact that there was a different expression of slavery there. A lot of the difference has to do with how slavery developed in North

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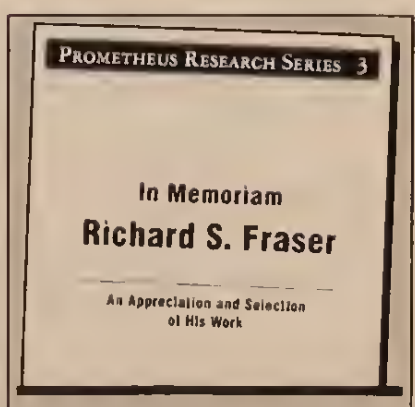

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Slavery...

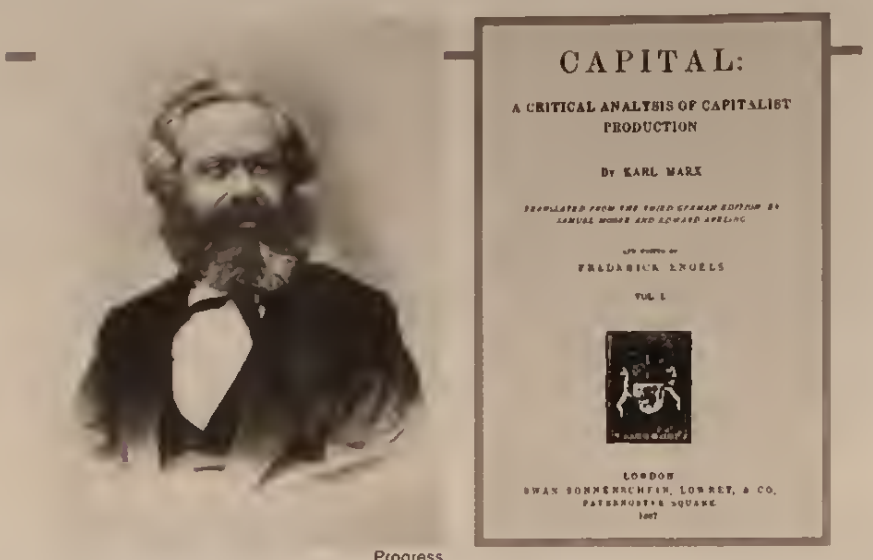
(continued from page 5)

America and the nature of British mercantilism. At the time the Virginian planters began to use slaves, the Dutch had already taken over the slave trade from the Portuguese, and because of Dutch-English rivalries, in 1651 Navigation Acts were passed, making it illegal for British colonists to buy products from other countries. Slaves were included as "products," obviously. This had an important ramification on the importation of slaves. In fact, many of the early slaves in Virginia were not actually from Africa, but from Barbados. It's also important to keep in mind that from the British perspective, the center of the slave trade was not in North America but in the Caribbean.

Therefore, the slave population in North America became a lot more stable, tended to live a lot longer and have more children. The details, for example, of slavery in Jamaica are horrid. The average slave tended to die within seven years of arriving in Jamaica. Therefore, although the slave trade provided only half a million African slaves to North America, by the time of the Civil War, the slave population in the United States had grown to four million people. A lot of this has to do with the demographics. In the British Caribbean, many plantations were left in the hands of overseers, while their absentee owners were content to stay in Britain. Eric Williams talks about this in his book, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944). In North America, the planters became more Americanized, and they tended to stay in North America. For example, the Lee family of Virginia arrived around 1639; the Washingtons arrived around the same time.

In the Caribbean, the plantations were much larger, and slaveowners there had more slaves than in North America. One result of this is that African culture was destroyed through the experience of slavery to a much larger degree in North America than in the Caribbean or Brazil. As Fraser put it in "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution," in the United States "the Negro people are among the oldest of all the immigrant groups. They are essentially American." And this is also shown in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, in which Douglass pointedly calls himself *An American Slave* in the title. He illustrates that slaves in the U.S. spoke English, were largely Christian (he's very powerful on the role of Christianity in supporting slavery), and were an organic part of American society. This is different than in Haiti, for example, where at the time of the Haitian Revolution, two-thirds of the black population were born in Africa. Or in Cuba. There's a book by Miguel Barnet, *The Autobiography of a Runaway Slave* (1966), based on interviews with a former slave who was born 50 years after Douglass, Esteban Montejo, that talks about how even in the late 19th century there were lots of aspects of African culture that survived in Cuba.

So that's an important part of understanding the integral and unique nature of slavery in the U.S., which has profound grammatic implications today: there's no separate black nation, and our program is one of revolutionary integrationism.



Progress

In his seminal 1867 work *Capital*, Karl Marx outlined the bloody nature of primitive capitalist accumulation.

Slavery and the Development of Capitalism

One of the strengths of the Williams book is that he shows how the development of British industrial capitalism was to a large degree based upon slavery. The bourgeoisie in Liverpool, Manchester and the City of London became rich through the slave trade, later through sugar trading, and then with textile production that used slave-produced cotton. Of course slavery was not what provided the labor *in* England in the development of English capitalism or the industrial revolution. But after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807, and then slavery itself in the British Caribbean in the 1830s, British capitalism still depended on slavery because the textile mills of Manchester, for example, needed cotton. In 1860, about 75 percent of all British cotton came from the American South. This is part of the reason, as Marx wrote at the time, that a section of the British bourgeoisie supported the South during the American Civil War.

Also, throughout the late 18th century, there was slavery in much of the North (comrades might remember the very good "Slavery in New York" exhibit at the New York Historical Society), even though it was not the central method of production. By the early 19th century, slavery as a social relationship had mostly disappeared from the North (the last Northern state to free its slaves was New Jersey, in 1846). But the main connection between the nascent bourgeoisie and slavery was not that they owned slaves.

There is a very interesting book called *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery* (2005), written by three reporters for the *Hartford Courant*. It shows how the Northern bourgeoisie was connected to the slave system by a million threads: they bought molasses, which was made with slave labor, and sold rum as part of the Triangle Trade; they lent money to Southern planters; and most of the cotton that was sold to Britain was shipped through Northern ports, including here in New York City. They financed the slave trade, and even after it became illegal, there were still ships leaving from New York that were involved in slave trading. And they sold manufactured goods to the South. This is the background to the relationship between Northern capitalism and slavery. Capitalism is very different from slavery, but at the same time they are very historically connected.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Katrina...

(continued from page 3)

deaths that likely number in the thousands. The black Democratic Party New Orleans mayor, Ray Nagin, ordered an evacuation but provided no resources for anyone without a car to get out. Former president Bill Clinton publicly solidarized with Bush Junior and also Senior, seeking to restore the spirit of "national unity." Nationally, Democratic politicians are clamoring that the administration's inaction over New Orleans shows its incapacity to respond to "terrorist" threats. They aim to present themselves as the party best able to wage the "war on terror," a code word for ripping up the rights of immigrants, black people, the labor movement and most everyone else.

Despite differences over particular policies, the Republicans and Democrats are united in defending capitalism—an anarchic, irrational profit-driven system that cannot even provide for the safety and welfare of the population. The situation cries out for a socialist planned economy, in which natural resources and the technological and productive forces of society would be marshaled ***on behalf of human needs***, not profit. What is urgently required is to build a workers party that can lead a workers revolution to rip power from the hands of the capitalist class and its political agents, right-wing Republican and liberal Democrat alike....

The fatal undermining of the flood control system around New Orleans did not begin the day that George W. Bush entered the White House in January 2001. Far from it! Over two decades of neglect include the eight years of the Democratic Clinton administration in the 1990s, during which the U.S. experienced an economic boom and the federal government managed to run a sizable budget surplus.

But the pork barrel triumphed as usual, as politicians of both parties diverted the Army Corps of Engineers' money to far less important projects, as right-wing *New York Times* columnist John Tierney pointed out in "The Case for a Cover-Up" (10 September). Thus the Louisiana Congressional delegation and Democratic Senator Mary Landrieu, who now attacks Bush for not anticipating the breach of the levees, "have been shortchanging the levees themselves" and have "directed large sums to dubious Corps projects aimed at increasing barge traffic, not preventing floods."...

Some 40 years after the passage of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts, the Gulf Coast disaster demonstrates that the basic condition of blacks as an oppressed color-caste forcibly segregated at the bottom of American society has not changed. Black and white liberals have long hailed the civil rights movement of the late 1950s-early 1960s as a historic triumph in the struggle for racial equality. Certainly, the end of legalized segregation in the South was a genuine and important democratic gain. But black oppression is rooted in the very structure of American capitalism, as the catastrophe in New Orleans has so graphically demonstrated. As we wrote in an early, basic document of the Spartacist League:

> "The vast majority of Black people—both North and South—are today workers who, along with the rest of the American working class, must sell their labor power in order to secure the necessities of life to those who buy labor power in order to make profit. The buyers of labor power, the capitalists, are a small minority whose rule is maintained only by keeping the majority who labor for them divided and misled. The fundamental division created deliberately along racial lines has kept the Negro workers who entered American capitalism at the bottom, still at the bottom. Ultimately their road to freedom lies only through the struggle with the rest of the working class to abolish capitalism and establish in its place an egalitarian, socialist society.
>
> "Yet the struggle of the Black people of this country for freedom, while part of the struggle of the working class as a whole, is more than that struggle. The Negro people are an oppressed race-color caste, in the main comprising the most exploited layer of the American working class.... Because of their position as both the most oppressed and also the most conscious and experienced section, revolutionary black workers are slated to play an exceptional role in the coming American revolution."
>
> — "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom," *Spartacist* special supplement, May-June 1967

...Black people are not just victims of American capitalism. Despite the destruction of industrial jobs and erosion of union strength, black workers, whose rate of union membership is 32 percent higher than that of white workers, continue to be integrated into strategic sectors of the industrial proletariat—in urban transit, longshore, steel and auto. The proletariat alone has the power to shatter this racist, capitalist system. Won to a revolutionary program, black workers will be the living link fusing the anger of the dispossessed ghetto masses with the social power of the multiracial proletariat under the leadership of a Leninist vanguard party. ■

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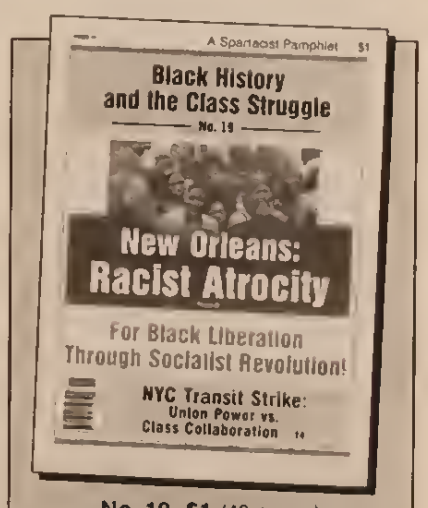

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Canada, Australia

Swine Flu Ravages Aboriginal Population

We reprint below an article from Spartacist Canada *No. 162 (Fall 2009), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.*

SPARTACIST CANADA

As of August 23, "Novel H1N1 Influenza A Virus" (swine flu) has killed more than 2,100 people worldwide and infected more than 200,000. These figures underestimate the sweep of the virus so far, as individual cases are no longer reported. Swine flu has already affected large numbers of otherwise healthy young people, but it is especially dangerous, and often fatal, to those with compromised immune systems, pregnant women and the poor. Aboriginal populations in Canada and Australia have been hit especially hard.

The epicentre of the initial outbreak in Canada was found in remote areas of northern Manitoba, where the infection rate among aboriginal people in July was 135 per 100,000—as opposed to about 20 per 100,000 for the general population. While Native people make up only 13.6 percent of the province's inhabitants, they account for two-thirds of those needing intensive care for treatment of swine flu.

On the other side of the world, Australian Aborigines in the remote Northern Territory were also dramatically impacted by the first wave of infections. This grotesque symmetry is no accident of genetics. The ravaging effects of swine flu are a symptom of the profound racism of this capitalist society, and the cumulative effect of centuries of social destruction, desperate poverty and brutal state repression visited on aboriginal peoples in both countries.

Capitalism Fuels Pandemic

Swine flu is a relatively new strain of the H1N1 virus containing a mixture of genetic material from human, pig and bird flu. The virus first appeared in Mexico, and some scientists believe its appearance is linked to the vast, low-wage hog production industry there. Workers on these factory farms face brutal conditions, including "lagoons" of untreated waste.

Wadden/TheTyee.ca

Lyndon Mechielsen

Capitalism enforces brutal marginalization and poverty for aboriginal peoples. Above: Native youth at Grassy Narrows, Ontario, Canada. Right: Aboriginal parents grieve over death from swine flu of their four-year-old daughter in Queensland, Australia.

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Racism, Capitalism and Public Health

Little is "natural" about this pandemic, any more than the disproportionate death rates blossoming among populations that the capitalist rulers have deemed "expendable." As with AIDS, which continues to ravage sub-Saharan Africa, or, on a much smaller scale, the SARS epidemic which claimed hundreds of lives in 2003, the inhuman incapacity of the system of production for private profit to rationally contend with pandemic illness is a modern manifestation of what revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky in 1938 already termed "the death agony of capitalism."

As the World Health Organization issued warnings over rising pandemic levels during the spring and new cases appeared everywhere, several governments slapped irrational bans on imports of live pigs, or—as in Egypt—slaughtered entire herds en masse. But as the initial outbreaks passed and it was determined that the effects of H1N1 were relatively mild for most people, official panic promptly gave way to the dictates of medicine-for-profit. Ottawa awarded its huge contract for 50 million doses of vaccines to a single company, pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline. Citing "packaging" issues, GSK wouldn't commit to begin deliveries until November, long *after* the predicted onset of a second wave of infections, which may hit as early as September.

As drug companies look to "make a killing" from this worldwide pandemic, the sheer irrationality of the bourgeois order stands starkly exposed. As we noted in "SARS: Capitalism, Racism and Public Health" (*SC* No. 137, Summer 2003) [reprinted in *WV* No. 806, 4 July 2003]:

> "With its technological development, capitalism has knit all of the globe together by creating a world market. Yet this system, based on competition and production for profit, produces war, poverty and massive inequality, especially in the countries subjugated by imperialism. Even eminently practicable public health measures such as vaccines and clean water are unavailable to hundreds of millions.
>
> "An international planned economy would take immediate steps to direct the necessary resources to areas affected by dangerous viruses like SARS, not to mention AIDS, which is killing tens of millions. Free, quality health care for all is within the bounds of material possibility, but not under capitalism, where the availability and quality of health care for the masses of working people is subordinate to the drive for profit."

Racist Canadian State Obstructs Anti-Flu Measures

In July, a photographer in Nunavut caught the image of two young Inuit children sleeping amid refuse on a street in the capital, Iqaluit. Picked up by major news media covering an official visit by prime minister Stephen Harper, the picture sparked outrage, much of it hypocritical. It was soon revealed that the mother of one of the boys had been ill with flu for several weeks, while at the same time having to care alone for five children.

Only rarely do the grotesque conditions endured by aboriginal peoples in Canada's far north make headlines: contaminated water, extreme poverty, crowding in inadequate unsafe housing, lack of access to decent food. Aboriginal households suffer rates of "severe food insecurity" over five times higher than non-aboriginal households. Such conditions, magnified by a serious lack of medical services, are a perfect vector for the spread of communicable diseases.

In every part of the country, the daily experience of life for aboriginal people is raw racism, homelessness, sky-high incarceration rates and police terror. Now the media are reporting a wave of murders of Native women in Manitoba, recalling the grisly killings of dozens of mainly aboriginal women in British Columbia several years ago. Suicide rates among Native youth are five to seven times higher than for the rest of the population. The very real social pathologies of domestic violence, abuse of children and drug addiction affect all capitalist societies, but are exacerbated by the brutal enforced marginalization and poverty of aboriginal people.

Outrageously, since the initial outbreaks of swine flu in May, Ottawa has time and again refused increasingly desperate appeals for help from Manitoba aboriginal leaders. Although at least 20 people had to be airlifted from Manitoba's remote St. Theresa Point First Nation 500 kilometres south to Winnipeg for treatment of the swine flu virus, the feds turned down Native leaders' requests for a field hospital to combat the infection. Health Canada officials instead announced they might have to *close* several nursing stations and medical centres in northern Manitoba due to lack of personnel.

Manitoba chiefs sounded the alarm by declaring a state of emergency in their communities and began a desperate effort to raise funds on their own for basic medical supplies and sanitary equipment for isolated communities ravaged by the first round of infections. Their efforts were met with bald-faced racism—even shipments of urgently needed hand sanitizer were held up by Health Canada, which professed "concerns" that these could be consumed for their alcohol content by the inhabitants of the flu-ravaged reserves! Residents of the St. Theresa Point First Nation visiting their sick relatives in Winnipeg hospitals were forced, on orders from Health Canada, to leave the St. Regis Hotel because they "could have been infected" with the virus.

On August 20, David Butler-Jones, who heads the Public Health Agency of Canada, declined to help fund 15,000 emergency flu kits being organized by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. The kits include such items as thermometers, gloves, masks and Tylenol which are either unavailable or prohibitively expensive in

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Overhill...

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Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) announced that it was initiating audits of an additional 652 businesses nationwide. We demand: Reinstate the fired workers now with full back pay and benefits! Down with the I.C.E. raids!

Where the Bush regime reveled in raw terror as it unleashed I.C.E. agents on workplaces to round up and deport immigrant workers, the Obama administration puts a premium on "efficiency." In a major speech on August 11, Homeland Security head Janet Napolitano bragged of arresting 181,000 immigrants and deporting 215,000 people so far this year, both numbers greater than for the same period two years ago under Bush. The Obama strategy is also better tailored to the profit needs of the companies involved. Workplace raids disrupt production for days at a time as the bosses scramble to replace detained workers, but the I-9 audits allow employers the opportunity to find lower-pay new hires in advance and are an open invitation to get rid of union activists and other "troublemakers." At Overhill Farms, the company hired part-time replacements for its dismissed union workers, who were full-time, mostly high-seniority employees.

The fired workers, members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)

Reuters

Immigrants deported from U.S. land in Guatemala City, July 10.

Local 770, have shown courage in the face of a vindictive employer. After the "no match" letters from the company were received, a protest was organized in front of the plant on May 1. The next day, the company stopped the lines, accusing four people of "terrorism" for supposedly tampering with production. The 254 workers who were to be fired on May 31 were sent home after the protest and never called back to work for their final 30 days at the company. When the protests outside the plant continued, the company responded by firing three more workers, including UFCW shop steward Marcelino Arteaga, on June 26.

The following week, Overhill Farms filed a lawsuit against Nativo Lopez, the head of Hermandad Mexicana Latinoamericana (HMLA), an immigrant rights organization helping to organize the protests, and six UFCW workers, among them Arteaga. It charges "an unlawful campaign aimed at coercing the company to violate federal law by rehiring former employees who have no legal right to work in the United States." If the company gets its way, this will set a dangerous precedent, equating protest of the mass firing of immigrant workers with attempted extortion. This lawsuit is part and parcel of the anti-immigrant witchhunt, partaking of earlier attempts by the capitalist state to go after Lopez and the HMLA for assisting immigrant workers in gaining citizenship. It is an attack on the labor movement as a whole and must be defeated!

Ferazzi/L.A. Times

Pickets at Vons distribution center in El Monte, California, during 2003-04 UFCW supermarket workers strike.

Labor Lieutenants of Capital

In response to the firings at Overhill Farms, the UFCW leaders have done next to nothing except file a few grievances. What's needed is a concerted effort by the whole union, backed by all labor, to beat back company/government victimizations. The potential to fight and win was shown in the campaign for union recognition by the workers at Smithfield's Tar Heel, North Carolina, pork processing plant. When the Smithfield bosses tried to fire 75 "no match" workers in November 2006, a two-day walkout that included black and white workers as well as Latinos forced the company to rehire everyone. However, by the time workers won their union in late 2008, I.C.E. workplace raids had driven out a significant number of immigrant workers. The battle at Smithfield underlines the need for a mass, militant union organizing drive throughout the country and particularly in the open shop South.

It will take the fighting unity of Latino, black and white workers against the bosses and their government to defeat the anti-immigrant, anti-union attacks. But this necessity runs straight up against the pro-capitalist program of the labor bureaucracy, which sees allies in bourgeois politicians, especially the Democrats, the government and the courts. Embracing national chauvinism, the union tops sacrifice the membership on the altar of maintaining the competitive edge and profitability of American capitalism.

As a domestic reflection of this chauvinism, these labor traitors *accept* the government's campaign against undocumented immigrants, seeking only to tinker with its methods of repression. The "unified framework" put forward by the AFL-CIO and Change to Win union federations in April is indicative. Its starting point is that immigration must be controlled in order to "build a stronger American economy." To regulate immigration the union tops urge an "independent commission that can assess labor market needs on an ongoing basis," leaving open the possibility of their own participation on such a commission as labor police for the capitalist state. The union bureaucrats dream of working together with the Obama White House to implement an "effective worker authorization mechanism" and "improve" the existing guest worker programs, which are the modern equivalent of indentured servitude, tying a worker's right to stay in the country directly to an individual employer.

As the last two decades of labor battles in L.A. in particular have demonstrated, immigrant workers form a key and vibrant component of the U.S. working class. Enlisting immigrant workers, many of whom have a history of militant struggle, in the front ranks of the labor movement is an urgent task both to fight the exploitation of the most vulnerable layers of the population and to reverse the decades-long decline of the trade unions. Labor must use its power to fight deportations and organize immigrant workers, demanding *full citizenship rights for everyone who makes it into this country*. If the unions are to be organizations of struggle by the working class, there must be a political fight against the labor bureaucrats who subordinate the class interests of the proletariat to those of the class enemy and their political parties.

Class Struggle vs. Liberal Pressure Politics

At a protest against the mass terminations of immigrant workers in downtown L.A. on August 1, fired Overhill Farms workers expressed to *Workers Vanguard* salesmen their anger at the inaction of the union. Spurned by Local 770, workers turned to the HMLA and the Hermandad General de Trabajadores Union International (HGTUI), a "union" being formed by Nativo Lopez. According to a 20 June article on Overhill in the Web publication *truthout* by journalist David Bacon, "That new organization [HGTUI], which will organize workers on a community basis, opposes employer sanctions and advocates helping workers to resist them.... What attracts the fired workers to the Hermandad is that it goes beyond the legal machinery of the grievance procedure, and organizes an active resistance."

Despite Lopez's activism, all this Obama supporter has to offer is the same pressure politics practiced by the UFCW and other union tops to channel working-class unrest into support for the Democrats. One example was the large immigrant rights demonstrations in 2006. On May Day, plants nationwide were idled when hundreds of thousands of overwhelmingly Latino immigrants took to the streets in cities across the country to protest anti-immigrant repression. At the same time, the main slogan of these protests, organized by Latino groups, the Catholic church, Democratic politicians and their allies in the trade-union bureaucracy, was "Today we march, tomorrow we vote."

Since then the vote has taken place and Obama was elected—and the situation for immigrants in this country is more precarious than it was under Bush. Amid the capitalist economic meltdown, jobs for immigrant workers, from construction to the sweatshops of the L.A. area, have increasingly dried up. At the same time, government repression is intensifying. In addition to aggressively pursuing the I-9 audits, the Obama administration has recently doubled the number of border agents, expanded the 287(g) program, which deputizes local and state law enforcement agencies to carry out anti-immigrant sweeps, and announced plans to revamp the immigrant detention system to accelerate the processing and deportation of undocumented immigrants. All the while, I.C.E. officials have promised to continue to detain workers in workplace raids.

As a signatory to a "Call for Immediate Action" on Labor Day and October 12, the HGTUI appeals to everyone from unions and churches to state and federal legislators to "honest employers that depend on immigrant labor" to join the "movement" for "fair and humane immigration reform." One widely touted "honest employer" is American Apparel CEO Dov Charney. The "progressive" gloss provided by his "Legalize L.A." ads advocating immigration reform makes it all the easier for Charney to exploit his workers and keep the union out. Despite the fact that he fired close to one-third of his manufacturing workforce, mirroring the recent drop in American Apparel's earnings, he has been welcomed, not targeted, at the protests. In 2003, this "honest employer" engaged in the tactics of fear and intimidation to defeat a UNITE garment workers organizing drive. The interests of labor and capital are diametrically opposed. The class collaboration promoted by the "Call for Immediate Action" is a recipe for defeat.

The main form of "active resistance" now pursued by Lopez is to call for a national consumer boycott against Overhill Farms and its products. This losing strategy seeks to pressure the bosses by building a public outcry based on moral indignation at the company's anti-labor practices. While sometimes a useful auxiliary tactic to a strike, a consumer boycott cannot substitute for getting Overhill Farms where it hurts: by shutting down production and stopping profits. Local 770 is the largest in the UFCW and includes veterans of the hard-fought UFCW supermarket workers strike of 2003-04, during which whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians joined together on the picket lines. That strike was knifed and defeated by the labor tops, who prevented it from being extended nationally out of deference to the bosses.

The problem is not the union but its leadership. It is the class-collaborationist program of the union bureaucracy that

Spartacus Youth Club Events

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, October 7, 6 p.m.
Meet the Marxists
UCLA, Haines Hall A78
For more information: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

Visit the ICL Web Site:
www.icl-fi.org

VANCOUVER

Thursday, September 17, 6:30 p.m.
The Marxist Perspective: The History of Class Struggles
University of British Columbia
SUB Room 42T

Thursday, October 8, 6:30 p.m.
Financial Crisis: Bankruptcy of Capitalism
University of British Columbia
SUB Room 42V
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

TORONTO

Wednesday, September 16, 6 p.m.
The *Communist Manifesto*: A Guide to Action
University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 1080
100 St. George Street

Wednesday, September 30, 6 p.m.
Capitalist Economic Crisis: Karl Marx Was Right
University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2119
100 St. George Street
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

Swine Flu...

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remote communities. Offering nothing, Butler-Jones sneered that such measures were "unwarranted" and would create "a false sense of protection." Health Canada's website meanwhile advises to "wash hands frequently with soap and warm water"—a sick joke for people living in overcrowded, deteriorating homes on dirt-poor reserves without clean water or toilets.

Racist contempt for the rights, health and lives of Native peoples is not an aberration of this or that official or governing party, but is woven into the very fabric of the bourgeois state. Beginning with the smallpox, measles and typhus that exterminated up to 90 percent of the New World's indigenous inhabitants, disease has always been the handmaiden of fraud and brute force in the ruling class's theft of aboriginal lands and resources. The last great plague to decimate Canada's aboriginal peoples occurred with the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic, which wiped out entire villages. The death toll among aboriginal people during that outbreak was more than five times greater than the national average.

Canadian capitalism was founded on the destruction of the pre-existing aboriginal societies, beginning under French and later English colonialism. The survivors were thrown into reserves established to formalize their dispossession at the hands of a virulently bigoted Anglo-chauvinist ruling class. From the hanging of Métis [people of mixed Native-European descent] leader Louis Riel nearly 125 years ago, to the assassination of Dudley George at Ipperwash, Ontario, to the military assaults at Gustafsen Lake, B.C., and Oka, Quebec, the price of resistance to this arrangement has been state violence and murder. Only a social revolution by the multiethnic working class, leading all oppressed minorities in the struggle to sweep away capitalist barbarism, will be able to redress the centuries of crimes inflicted on aboriginal societies by capitalist plunder and oppression.

Australia—Racist Hellhole for Aborigines

Substitute searing heat for bitter cold and the pictures of state-sponsored anti-aboriginal racism, grinding poverty and exclusion in Australia and Canada become nearly identical. Aborigines, who make up only 2.5 percent of the Australian population, have been hospitalized and are dying from swine flu at five times the national rate. Among the tiny and remote indigenous community of Palm Island, where unemployment is 90 percent and life expectancy only 50 years, one in ten residents were feared to have caught the virus. Elementary measures like quarantining patients are impossible on the island, where an average of 16 people are crowded into each house!

Palm Island epitomizes the brutal racism and social degradation imposed by the Australian rulers on Aboriginal people. It is also notorious for the brutal killing in 2004 of Mulrunji Doomadgee by the cop Chris Hurley. Hurley—the first cop *ever* to be charged for an Aboriginal death in police custody in Australia—was eventually exonerated, rewarded and promoted, while the leader of the Aboriginal protests over the murder, Lex Wotton, was sentenced to six years in jail.

On top of the permanent state of endemic poverty, malnutrition and chronic disease in Australia's "deep north," the current epidemic is hitting Aboriginal communities already besieged by a brutal police/military occupation. In 2007, the then Liberal/National government of John Howard sent cops and army personnel to invade and occupy 73 Aboriginal townships and communities on the pretext of stopping "child abuse," hypocritically banning alcohol and pornography. This occupation, a naked land grab, has been intensified by the current Labor government. When the state first launched this assault two years ago, our comrades of the Spartacist League of Australia immediately issued a protest statement, declaring:

> "The working class has a direct interest in taking up the fight to defend Aboriginal people and all the oppressed. ***For working class protests against racist state repression! Down with Howard's martial law! No to cop/military occupations of Northern Territory Aboriginal communities!***"
>
> —"Australia: Racist War on Aborigines," *SC* No. 154, Fall 2007 [reprinted in *WV* No. 895, 6 July 2007]

A further anti-Aboriginal atrocity sparked outrage this June, with the release of a coroner's report from Western Australia. It described the death in police custody of an Aboriginal elder who effectively "cooked to death" for hours in the back of a prison van without air conditioning as he was being transported. Guards who opened the van to find him near death, lying with third-degree burns on the burning-hot metal floor, would not even enter the van to help him, merely flicking water on him before driving on to a hospital.

Gruesome deaths in "police custody" are an all-too-familiar occurrence for Native people in both Canada and Australia, who know from daily experience that the greatest instigators of violence are the armed, uniformed gangs of the capitalist state.

Labour Must Defend Native Rights!

Native people need jobs at union wages and massive education, health and housing programs, including the provision of clean water and electricity. For free quality health care and education for all! But basic justice for aboriginal people and all the oppressed and exploited will not come through any amount of pressuring the capitalist state for a few limited and ultimately reversible concessions, but by the expropriation of the capitalist class under a workers state.

To achieve this will require a revolutionary party of working people forged on an authentic Marxist program, a party of the Bolshevik type, fundamentally different from the parties of capital or the pro-capitalist social democrats of the NDP [New Democratic Party]. Creating the nucleus of such a party, as part of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), is the purpose of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste. As we state in our "Programmatic Theses":

> "Only the destruction of capitalism can hold out the possibility of voluntary integration, on the basis of full equality, for those aboriginal peoples who desire it, and the fullest possible regional autonomy for those who do not....
>
> "The unremitting proletarian defense of Native people's lives and rights as equal citizens is part of the fight of the multiracial working class to overturn this whole brutal and violent capitalist system. Only an egalitarian-socialist society under workers rule will be able to redress three centuries of abuse and degradation."
>
> —*Who We Are, and What We Fight For* (August 1998)■

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impedes militant struggle to defend immigrants and the unions. The way forward is to oust the bureaucrats and replace them with a class-struggle leadership that will mobilize workers independently of and in opposition to the capitalist rulers and their political agents.

John Grant, director of Packinghouse, Manufacturing and Food Processing Division for Local 770, told *WV* that workers at the UFCW-organized Farmer John meatpacking plant in Vernon, the industrial city in L.A. County where Overhill Farms is located, have also received "no match" letters. A group of workers from Overhill Farms, American Apparel and Farmer John distributed an "Open Letter" at rallies on July 29 and August 1 in downtown L.A. that said: "This is certainly not the change we voted for, and not the immigration reform promised by President Barack Obama." In fact, it was. During his campaign, Obama pledged to "remove incentives to enter the country illegally by cracking down on employers who hire undocumented immigrants"—i.e., the desktop raids.

Advancing the class struggle in this country goes hand in hand with the fight to break workers and minorities from illusions in Obama and the Democratic Party and to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Only through a socialist revolution that smashes the capitalist state and erects in its place a workers state based on the expropriation of industry and the banks can there be an end to the destructive boom-bust cycle of capitalism and all manner of racial, sexual and national discrimination. This ABC of Marxism is rejected by the various phony socialists who join the labor bureaucrats in fostering illusions in the Democratic Party.

Among the organizations that sponsored the rallies is the liberal Southern California Immigration Coalition (SCIC), which includes the reformist International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Freedom Socialist Party. In March, SCIC held a demonstration in L.A. under the slogans "Ayer Votamos y Hoy Marchamos [Yesterday We Voted and Today We March]! Full legalization NOW! Stop the I.C.E. Raids! YES WE CAN!" The self-proclaimed socialists of the ISO are past masters of the political shell game that is a pillar of capitalist rule in America—the notion that the Democratic Party is the "friend" of labor, blacks and immigrants. In a 25 August article posted on socialistworker.org, the ISO hails Obama's campaign promises "to end the scapegoating of immigrants" and concludes by advising the imperialist Commander-in-Chief: "The idea of accepting concessions—in this case, more arrests, detentions and deportations for immigrant workers—before Congress even considers a carrot to match the stick gives away far too [sic] ground."

The agenda of the reformist ISO is to prettify the ugly face of U.S. imperialist capitalism. We understand that there cannot be a just immigration policy under capitalism, an inherently unjust system rooted in the exploitation of the many by the few. As we explained in the International Communist League Declaration of Principles (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998):

> "Modern capitalism, i.e., imperialism, reaching into all areas of the planet, in the course of the class struggle and as economic need demands, brings into the proletariat at its bottom new sources of cheaper labor, principally immigrants from poorer and less-developed regions of the world—workers with few rights who are deemed more disposable in times of economic contraction. Thus capitalism in ongoing fashion creates different strata among the workers, while simultaneously amalgamating the workers of many different lands. Everywhere, the capitalists, abetted by aristocracy-of-labor opportunists, try to poison class consciousness and solidarity among the workers by fomenting religious, national and ethnic divisions. The struggle for the unity and integrity of the working class against chauvinism and racism is thus a vital task for the proletarian vanguard."

Our program is for a series of workers revolutions that would lay the basis for an international planned, socialist economy. This is the only road to eliminating poverty, the main driving force for mass migrations throughout the world, and providing a life of abundance for all.■

Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club Forum

Iran in Turmoil

Imperialists Hands Off!

For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party in Iran to Fight for Workers Revolution!

TORONTO

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spartcan@on.aibn.com

Saturday, October 3, 7 p.m.
OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education)
252 Bloor Street West, Room 5150
(at St. George subway)

Spartacist Forums

U.S. Imperialism: Enemy of Women's Rights Internationally—For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

- Honor George Tiller! For Free Abortion on Demand!
- For Free, Quality Health Care!
- Break with the Democrats—Forge a Workers Party!

BAY AREA
Saturday
October 10, 3 p.m.
The Women's Building
3543 18th Street
San Francisco
(near 16th St./Mission BART)
(510) 839-0851
sfbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES
Saturday
October 10, 2 p.m.
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
3300 Wilshire Blvd.
(2 blocks west of Vermont/Wilshire Red Line Station)
(213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY
Saturday
October 10, 3 p.m.
CWA Local 1180 Hall
6 Harrison Street
Manhattan
(1 train to Franklin, west on Franklin to Hudson, 1 block south to Harrison)
(212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

Capitalism in Its Death Agonies—

America Needs Socialist Revolution!

Break with the Democratic Party of Racism and War!
For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

CHICAGO

(312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

Saturday, September 12, 5 p.m.
University of Illinois at Chicago
Student Center East, Room 713
750 S. Halsted Street

Semenya...

(continued from page 12)

time she received high-quality training as a runner.

Semenya is hardly unique among women athletes in having what is deemed a "masculine" appearance. Legendary Mozambican 800-metre champion Maria Mutola was dogged throughout her career by similar speculation that she was not really female. Compare this with the treatment of white South African runner Zola Budd who was described merely as "tomboyish." But even when it comes to the question of "sex determination," research shows that one in 1,000 people are born with an "intersex" condition ("The Gender Trap," guardian.co.uk, 30 July 2008). According to the Intersex Society of North America, the term "intersex" is used to describe a variety of conditions in which a person's sexual anatomy doesn't fit the typical medical definitions of male and female. There are also chromosomal and adrenal anomalies that are sometimes described by this term. As Alice Dreger, a professor of medical humanities and bioethics at Northwestern University, pointed out to the *New York Times*: "It turns out genes, hormones and genitals are pretty complicated. There isn't really one simple way to sort out males and females. Sports require that we do, but biology doesn't care. Biology does not fit neatly into simple categories, so they do these tests." Dreger said, "But at the end of the day, they are going to have to make a social decision on what counts as male and female, and they will wrap it up as if it is simply a scientific decision" ("Gender Test After a Gold Medal Finish," 19 August).

In fact, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) abolished universal gender testing after the Atlanta games in 1996, where eight women "failed" the tests but were cleared after challenging the results. Seven of these women were found to have an intersex condition. Such gender testing in Olympic sports began in 1968 at around the same time that anabolic steroid use by athletes came under scrutiny. Much of the hysteria against steroid use and accusations of cheating by having men compete as women were whipped up against the former Soviet degenerated workers state, as well as the East European deformed workers states, as part of the anti-Communist Cold War. Czech runner Jarmila Kratochvilova was dogged by gender and steroids accusations after setting the world record in Semenya's event in 1983, a record which still stands. Such anti-Communist accusations of cheating also did the rounds in the bourgeois press around the Olympic Games in China last year, such as the imputation that China had lied about the age of some of its champion female gymnasts.

Anti-Communism also plays a role in the attacks on Caster Semenya. An article in the *Mail & Guardian* (28 August) focuses on one of her coaches, Ekkart Arbeit, who was the head coach of the athletics team of the former DDR (East Germany) and a key target of the furor whipped up over the "doping" of athletes. Such accusations were used to deny the enormous advantages of the planned economies of the bureaucratically deformed workers states, where capitalism was overthrown. As Katarina Witt, the world champion East German figure skater, recalled, "The state provided for me.... Skating is rather expensive, and in East Germany all the equipment and the time on the ice that you needed were provided" (*Times* online, 25 May 2003).

Reuters

Friends and relatives of Caster Semenya gather outside her home at impoverished village of Ga-Masehlong outside Polokwane.

The IOC and IAAF have continued the practice of "gender testing" if a complaint is made about a particular athlete. These tests are supposed to be kept private, but in Semenya's case she and her coaches were clearly pressured by IAAF officials to have her drop out of the competition prior to the final, including by making public the accusation that she is not a woman. The IAAF has managed to take to truly grotesque levels the regular humiliation Caster Semenya has been subjected to here in South Africa, such as bathroom inspections demanded by rival teams in local athletics competitions. Today it was reported that after Semenya returned from the African championships in Mauritius in July, she was given gender tests that she thought were just standard drug tests. Her coach, Wilfred Daniels, has resigned and apologised to the athlete for the way he and Athletics South Africa, the sport's national governing body, had handled the whole debacle. The devastating consequences of such high-tech "gender testing" as the IAAF practices were seen in the case of Santhi Soundarajan, an Indian runner whose brief hope of lifting her family out of dire poverty in the state of Tamil Nadu was shattered after she "failed" a gender test and was stripped of an Asian Games 800-metre medal in 2006. Soundarajan subsequently tried to commit suicide.

The cruel and twisted treatment of Semenya and other athletes before her who have faced scrutiny for not looking sufficiently "feminine" is an expression of the reactionary sexual stereotyping upheld as the norm in capitalist society. These stereotypes along with entrenched male and female gender roles flow from the institution of the family, which is the main social source of oppression of women, youth and homosexuals in class society. The institution of the family, along with organised religion and traditional authority, serves as a key prop for the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression by instilling subservience to authority and ensuring that the task of rearing the next generation of wage slaves falls largely on the shoulders of the domestic slaves, women. Anything that deviates from the family "ideal" is thus viewed as a threat to social order, whether it be gay sex or giving women control over reproduction through access to contraception and abortion.

The consequences of not conforming to these reactionary sexual stereotypes are often quite brutal in South Africa, where women suspected of being lesbians are targets for "corrective rape" as with the gang rape and murder in 2008 of former women's soccer star and gay rights activist Eudy Simelane ("Raped and Killed for Being a Lesbian: South Africa Ignores 'Corrective' Attacks," guardian.co.uk, 12 March). This murder echoed that of AIDS activist Gugu Dlamini in 1998 by a rabid mob who beat her senseless for having the courage to talk openly about her disease and sex life. In Durban in 2007, Zandile Mpanza was stripped naked and paraded by a group of men who then burnt her house down for violating a rule against women wearing pants in the area of their hostel. South Africa has one of the highest rates of rape in the world, and for those women who even try to report the crime, the result is generally further humiliation at the hands of the police and the courts.

Such violent abuse is the most extreme reflection of the degraded status of women more generally in South Africa, which is also measured in high rates of HIV/AIDS infection and death among women, with a high maternal mortality rate along with infant mortality that has worsened since 1990. The intersection of racial, sexual and class oppression in South Africa is in many ways epitomised by the legions of black women who toil in the most menial of domestic service and cleaning jobs in the wealthy, white suburbs, just as they did under apartheid.

For a Black-Centred Workers Government!

South African athletics officials along with the Tripartite Alliance government have vigorously protested the treatment of Caster Semenya, with Parliament planning to lodge a complaint with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights because the gender tests constituted a "gross and severe undermining of rights and privacy." The government organised a "hero's welcome" for Semenya and other gold medalists upon their return to the country along with a meeting with the president, Jacob Zuma. The justified outrage over the abuse of Semenya is predictably being used by the capitalist government of the bourgeois-nationalist African National Congress (ANC) and its partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the COSATU trade-union bureaucracy, to whip up a frenzy of nationalist pride, complete with "anti-imperialist" rhetoric. Yet it is these very same leaders who for 15 years have administered a system of neo-apartheid capitalism in South Africa, where the economic order continues to be based on white privilege and the superexploitation of the overwhelmingly black working class by the Randlords and their imperialist partners.

The misleaders of the working class in the SACP and COSATU bureaucracy seek to obscure the reality that they themselves are responsible for maintaining the capitalist system which perpetuates racial, national and women's oppression. The SACP/Young Communist League and COSATU spokesmen piously preach the need to defend women's rights, while defending a bourgeois constitution that enshrines the authority of tribal chiefs and elders who enforce a benighted social order in rural areas. That practices such as abducting women into marriage continue in some parts of the country gives a sense of how fraudulent the SACP's purported "national democratic revolution" really is. What we wrote ten years ago remains true today:

> "While the African National Congress-led bourgeois-nationalist government of Nelson Mandela has put on paper some of the broadest liberal democratic laws—striking down prohibitions on homosexual sex, legalising abortion and promising free health care to pregnant women and their children—all these legal provisions amount to a cruel hoax.... This capitalist government cannot and will not deliver on promises of quality health care for women, housing, jobs, education or anything else the population desperately needs."
>
> —"Brutal Murder of South African AIDS Activist," *Workers Vanguard* No. 706, 5 February 1999

The only road forward in addressing the triple oppression of race, sex and class faced by black women in South Africa is that of permanent revolution. Genuine national and social liberation will be realised only through the expropriation of the capitalists and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We fight for a *black-centred workers government*. There can be no justice in South Africa until the non-white majority has power in a workers state that would unite the many black tribal- and language-based groups along with the Coloured (mixed-race) and Indian populations, with ample room and full democratic rights for those whites who would join in building a society based on genuine equality. Proletarian revolution will put the enormous wealth of this country at the disposal of the workers and poor. Only by extending socialist revolution internationally, especially to the imperialist centres, and building a world socialised planned economy can the material conditions of life for the masses of southern Africa and the rest of the neocolonial world be lifted up to a level of material abundance for all.

Such a revolutionary overturn will make it possible to eliminate the material roots of women's oppression: to replace the institution of the family with socialised childcare and housework, thus freeing women from domestic servitude. This is the program that Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party sought to carry out in the young Soviet workers state following the October Revolution of 1917. Our task is to build a revolutionary workers party like the Bolshevik Party that will act as a tribune of the people, a defender of all the oppressed, to lead the fight for socialist revolution as part of a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International.■

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Afghanistan...

(continued from page 1)

politicians—whether Democrats, Republicans, Greens or "Independents."

Our starting point is proletarian class opposition to the U.S. capitalist rulers and to the imperialist system as a whole. In the lead-up to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq we called for the military defense of these countries without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats or the capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Today, insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism without giving them any political support. *All U.S. troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now! Hands off Pakistan!*

Antiwar Movement: Shill for Democrats

A recent *New York Times* (30 August) article, commenting on protests planned for October against the Afghanistan occupation, noted that the antiwar movement has been "largely dormant since the election of Barack Obama." In fact, it has been largely comatose since the 2006 midterm elections, when the Democrats gained control of the House of Representatives. Now, as the article described, liberals have been especially loath to "challenge" the Democratic administration they helped elect. The call for withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan has been packaged as a plea to Obama to fulfill his promise of "change," both at desultory antiwar rallies in March as well as for the upcoming October protests.

The *Times* article notes that a more recent liberal refrain is that the president "risks his entire domestic agenda" by getting bogged down in Afghanistan. Another antiwar organizer complained, "There are some who feel that powerful forces are pushing the president to stay on this course and that we have to build a more powerful movement to change that course." In reality, the Afghanistan war *is* Obama's war and his domestic agenda—bailing out the capitalists while shafting workers, blacks, immigrants and the poor—goes hand in hand with U.S. imperialist military depredations abroad.

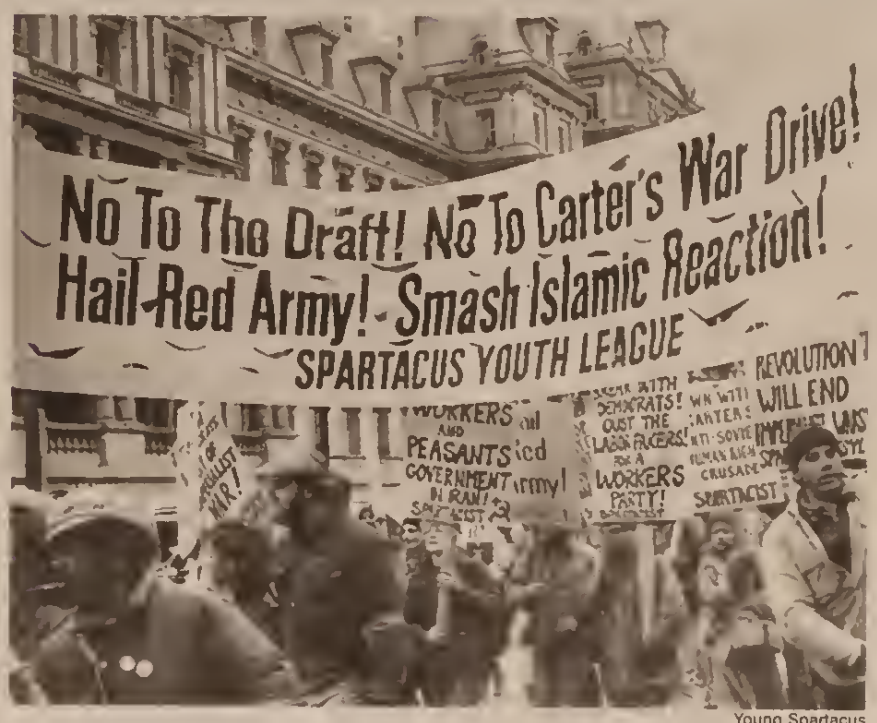
The *Times* article confirms what we have said all along: the liberal/reformist-led antiwar movement has been nothing but a shill for the Democrats. In the lead-up to the presidential election, World Can't Wait, run by the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), screamed, "Drive Out the Bush Regime." The International Socialist Organization (ISO) enthused that the Democrats "are finally giving voice to the frustration" about the war (*Socialist Worker*, 4 May 2007). Likewise, the ANSWER coalition, currently led by the Party for Socialism and Liberation, and the Troops Out Now Coalition, initiated by Workers World Party, both pushed the politics of "Anybody but Bush."

A recent article on the CounterPunch Web site (4-6 September) by quirky radical-liberal columnist Alexander Cockburn reported that Socialist Action leader and West Coast antiwar coalition organizer Jeff Mackler recently cancelled an antiwar protest against Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi when it was learned that Pelosi's appearance was sponsored by the San Francisco Labor Council. Cockburn quotes Labor Council chief Tim Paulson saying: "Our partners in the antiwar movement"—among which Paulson includes U.S. Labor Against the War and ANSWER—"have been calling me to say they are condemning this protest as irresponsible and divisive."

Afghanistan and Soviet Intervention

For much of the reformist left, support for the Democratic Party at home and for anti-Communism abroad have been defining features. With few exceptions, these reformist "socialists" all howled with the imperialists in demanding Soviet troops out of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

Washington started funneling arms to Islamic *mujahedin* (holy warriors) from the moment the Soviet-allied People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) came to power in April 1978. As modernizing left-nationalists, the PDPA attempted to implement a program for redistributing land, lowering the bride price, educating women and freeing them from the *burqa*. In the context of backward, benighted Afghanistan, these relatively modest reforms were nothing short of revolutionary. When the huge Islamic hierarchy launched a fierce insurgency, the Soviet Union intervened in December 1979 after repeated requests by the embattled PDPA regime. Beginning with Democrat Jimmy Carter and continuing under Republican Ronald Reagan, the U.S. seized on the Red Army intervention to launch a renewed anti-Soviet offensive (Cold War II), in particular waging a proxy war aimed at killing



Young Spartacus

Spartacist/Spartacus Youth League contingent at March 1980 anti-draft demonstration in Washington, D.C.

Soviet soldiers and officers in Afghanistan.

For Marxists, there was no question which side working people and the oppressed the world over had in this conflict. The threat of a CIA-backed Islamic takeover on the USSR's southern flank posed pointblank the need for ***unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union***, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. Moreover, the Soviet military intervention opened the possibility of social liberation for the Afghan masses, particularly women. We Trotskyists proclaimed: ***Hail Red Army! Extend socialist gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!***

In contrast, the ISO and its then-parent group in Britain, Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party, demanded: "Troops Out of Afghanistan!" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 12 January 1980). The Maoist RCP likewise condemned the Soviet intervention. To justify siding with the reactionary *mujahedin* and their imperialist patrons, the reformist left invoked the lie of "poor little Afghanistan" and screamed about the national rights of the country being trampled by "Soviet imperialism." In fact, even if Afghanistan were a nation, the question of its national self-determination would have been subordinated to the overriding class and social questions—i.e., defense of the Soviet Union as well as the struggle for women's rights and social progress in Afghanistan.

However, Afghanistan is not a nation but rather a patchwork of tribes and peoples, with a minuscule proletariat. There weren't sufficient internal class forces to sustain the PDPA's reforms, let alone a social revolution. Soviet military intervention, however, posed the overthrow of the landlords, tribal warlords and mullahs that dominated Afghan society and perpetuated its backwardness. The social progress potentially open to the Afghan peoples was visible in the stark contrast between Afghanistan's impoverished backwardness and the huge advances in living standards, education and women's rights just to the north in Soviet Central Asia, which once looked much like Afghanistan.

Under the Soviet military umbrella, the Afghan government began mass literacy campaigns and provided medical care. Over 300,000 peasants received land. By the late 1980s, half of all university students in Afghanistan were women, and women made up 40 percent of the country's doctors, 70 percent of its teachers, and 30 percent of its civil servants. Women in the workforce had increased 50-fold, and 15,000 women served as soldiers and commanders in the Afghan army. The London *Guardian* online (30 September 2001) quoted Saira Noorani, a woman surgeon who left Kabul in 2001: "'Life was good under the Soviets,' Saira said. 'Every girl could go to high school and university. We could go wherever we wanted and wear what we liked'." She also said: "Since then everything has been a long dark night."

Afghanistan and American Intervention

In a campaign to militarily and economically bleed the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, the U.S. launched the largest CIA covert operation in history. But the Red Army was *not* defeated militarily in Afghanistan. A prominent commander of the Soviet Army in Afghanistan, Major General Alexander Liakhovsky, asserted in his book, *Afghan: Tragedy and Valor* (1995): "During the period of the 'Afghan war' they [Soviet soldiers] never once retreated and never surrendered their positions." He added: "They did much for the good of the Afghan people in carrying out their peacekeeping functions (they provided medical aid to the population; they built roads, schools and hospitals; they provided humanitarian aid and so forth). For many long years, for example, they preserved from destruction Kabul and other major cities, which, as I have already stated, after the mujahedin came to power were reduced to battlefield arenas and now lie in ruins."

It is not just this former Soviet general who recognizes that the Red Army was not militarily defeated. Even on the eve of the Soviet withdrawal, a writer for *Soldier of Fortune* magazine noted that the Soviet army could "still go wherever it wants to go in Afghanistan" (quoted in Diego Cordovez and Selig S. Harrison, *Out of Afghanistan* [1995]).

The Soviet withdrawal in 1988-89 was a *political* betrayal by the Stalinist bureaucracy under Mikhail Gorbachev, opening the door to capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR itself in 1991-92. The Soviet intervention cut against the grain of the nationalist Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." Gorbachev's betrayal flowed from the whole outlook of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which subordinated the interests of the international proletariat in an attempt to defend its own privileged position as a parasitic layer resting on the collectivized economy, thus undermining the defense of the Soviet workers state itself. We fought for a proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and return the Soviet Union to the Bolshevik internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky. We warned from the outset that the Kremlin bureaucracy, in its quest for "peaceful coexistence" with U.S. imperialism, might cut a deal at the expense of the Afghan peoples.

After the Soviet withdrawal, the Afghan government fought on valiantly for three years. The Partisan Defense Committee—a legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—wrote to the PDPA government in 1989 offering "to organize an international brigade to fight to the death" against the forces of Islamic reaction. When that offer was turned down, the PDC, at the request of the Afghan government, launched an international fund drive to aid civilian victims of the *mujahedin* siege of Jalalabad, raising over $44,000.

When the *mujahedin* finally took Kabul in 1992, re-enslaving Afghan women, the various tribally based *mujahedin* militias carried out a vengeful war of mass murder, torture and rape of rival ethnic populations, which left at least 50,000 people dead in Kabul alone. The Taliban, recruiting from the historically dominant Pashtun ethnic population, emerged as the strongest of the *mujahedin* factions. Backed by the Pakistani government and supported by U.S. imperialism, the Taliban came to power in 1996.

The 2001 U.S. invasion that drove the Pashtun-based Taliban fundamentalists from power installed in its place a regime based largely on the coalition of former Islamic *mujahedin* militias—Tajik, Uzbek, and Hazara—grouped in the Northern Alliance. Karzai was chosen by the U.S. as the Pashtun figurehead, while Northern Alliance warlords, mainly Tajik, filled key security and military posts. This remains, more or less, the reactionary regime overseen by the U.S. today. Karzai's vice presidential running mate in the recent election, Muhammad Fahim, is one of the biggest drug lords in the country, while another of his supporters, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, was notorious for cutting off women's breasts (*Libération*, 20 August). For his part, Abdullah Abdullah, a former foreign minister under Karzai, was once an aid to Tajik *mujahedin* leader Ahmed Shah Massoud, a butcher who in 1993 ordered the massacre of hundreds of Hazara men, women and children, and destroyed the Hazara neighborhood in Kabul, killing up to one thousand more.

While cynically decrying the plight of women under the deposed Taliban regime, Afghanistan's U.S. overseers brokered a constitution in 2004 that effectively enshrined Islamic *sharia* law. Today, the average life expectancy for Afghan women, as well as men, is 44 years (24 years below the world average for women) and the literacy rate is 12.6 percent. Women are still forced to wear the head-to-toe *burqa* in public. According to the Afghan Education Ministry, as of early summer at least 478 schools, mostly for girls, had been destroyed, damaged or threatened out of existence by Islamist terror.

The U.S. fights its "war on terror" in order to impose its will on oppressed peoples around the world. The horrors produced by U.S. imperialism's "holy war" against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, as well as the present occupation of the country, show once again that the capitalist system is a barrier to social progress and a breeding ground for barbaric reaction. Our purpose is the forging of a multiracial revolutionary workers party that fights for the defeat of U.S. imperialism through socialist revolution. As opposed to the Obama-enthralled reformist opponents, we follow the proletarian, internationalist and revolutionary road of the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky.■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Caster Semenya—Leave Her Alone!

Racist, Sexist Furor Over South African Runner

Getty

JOHANNESBURG, September 7—At last month's world athletics (track and field) championships in Berlin 18-year-old Mokgadi Caster Semenya, a black woman from an impoverished village in rural South Africa, achieved a stunning victory in the women's 800-metre race, running the fastest time this year with a huge lead over her competitors. Her accomplishment was all the more impressive given what transpired just before she ran the final: the world media was informed by the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) that Semenya was being subjected to "gender verification" testing. After Semenya won the gold medal, an IAAF spokesman announced that she would be stripped of the medal if tests showed that she was not a woman.

Caster Semenya was able to become a world champion athlete despite growing up in a country where the degraded status of women is reflected in traditional practices such as *lobola* (bride price) and polygamy, which reduce women to property to be bought and sold into marriage. Yet it was in Berlin that she faced the ultimate humiliation at the hands of athletics officials and doctors who wanted to prod and poke her young body to determine whether she had an "unfair advantage" over her competitors because she is not female enough. The treatment of this athlete, who has struggled to overcome the barriers of race, sex and class in neo-apartheid South Africa, has ignited a firestorm of indignation and protest from all quarters in this country, and beyond. It has been aptly described as a modern-day version of the abuse of Sarah Baartman, a Khoikhoi woman who was taken to Europe in 1810 to be studied and exhibited as an anthropological and sexual curiosity ("the Hottentot Venus") and whose brain and genitals remained on display in the Paris Musée de l'Homme until at least 1974.

The IAAF is well aware that there was nothing questionable about Semenya's performance, which was slower than that of the woman gold medalist in last year's Olympics. The vilification of Semenya, in which the Afrikaans newspaper *Rapport* had a hand, has everything to do with race and sex. As Semenya's mother bluntly stated, "They're just jealous because they don't want black people improving their status" ([London] *Guardian*, 23 August).

Black South African athletes suffered "double apartheid" for many years. Under the system of apartheid segregation, the country's white capitalist rulers denied most black athletes the material and legal means to participate in organised sport at the national and international level. This isolation was exacerbated by the international boycott of everything South African promoted by anti-apartheid liberals throughout the 1960s to '80s. While apartheid formally ended in 1994, when Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first black president, sport, like other aspects of life, still reflects the poverty and deprivation of the oppressed non-white masses.

The Politics of Biology

In Caster Semenya's case, the most advanced forms of medical testing, including genetics and endocrinology, are to be used to supposedly determine her sex. The IAAF states that it is not accusing Semenya of knowingly cheating by trying to pass for a woman. Instead, according to their cruel logic, they are checking whether, unbeknownst to her and her family, she is not really female. As some have pointed out, Semenya's rapid improvement as an athlete can be explained in large part by the fact that last year she moved from a rural backwater with virtually no sporting facilities and enrolled as a student of sport science at the University of Pretoria, where for the first

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L.A.: Anti-Union Onslaught at Overhill Farms

Labor: Fight Victimization of Immigrant Workers!

Jorge Lopez

Los Angeles, July 29: Protest against use of I-9 audits and electronic verification to fire immigrant workers.

As part of a recent blitz of measures to crack down on "illegal" immigration, the Obama administration has been pushing employers to fire workers whose Social Security numbers do not match government records. To force the issue, Obama expanded many of the anti-immigrant programs of the Bush White House, such as the E-Verify database and I-9 audits of employer records. Mass terminations of immigrant workers have followed the audits at one industrial plant after another, from 254 workers, mostly women, at food processor Overhill Farms in May to about 1,500 at clothing maker American Apparel in September, both in the Los Angeles area.

These "desktop raids" have ravaged immigrant families, as the *Los Angeles Times* (12 June) described in the case of Overhill Farms: "There were no frantic scenes of desperate workers fleeing *la migra* through the gritty streets of the industrial suburb southeast of downtown Los Angeles. For more than 200 Overhill workers, however, the effect was devastating: All lost steady jobs last month and now find themselves in a precarious employment market, without severance pay or medical insurance. It wasn't a hot tip or an undercover informant that helped seal their fates, but a computer check of Social Security numbers." The Overhill firings are a window into what the Democrats have in store for immigrant workers everywhere. On July 1, the

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No Deportations! Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants!

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 943 | C-701 | 25 September 2009

Obama Takes Aim at Medicare, Union Health Plans

For Socialized Medicine!

Expropriate the Health Care Industry!

It would be hard to find a more blatant expression of the capitalist profit system than the plans afoot to "reform" the catastrophe of health care in America. The commodity trade here is in human lives and the life-sucking health insurance giants and drug companies are the ones who will continue to be laughing all the way to the bank. In his September 9 speech to Congress, Obama packaged his health care "reform" plan as a means to provide coverage for the nearly 50 million uninsured Americans. He also claimed his plan would protect those with insurance from being subjected to the tender mercies of the HMOs, which deploy an army of administrators to "insure" that you get the least coverage possible, if they don't just cut off your benefits entirely—particularly if you have a life-threatening illness.

The Democrats' posture as "friends" of working people makes them effective political representatives for enforcing the rule of a system that is based on exploitation and oppression. Restoring the profitability and competitive edge of U.S. imperialism, where health care costs are the highest and the health of the majority of the population the worst in the advanced industrialized countries, is the real name of the "health care reform" game. As characterized by Wendell Potter, a former CIGNA insurance executive who is now an industry whistle blower, what's being put forward today might as well be called "The Insurance Industry Profit Protection and Enhancement Act."

With the official unemployment rate crowding 10 percent—and double that when the underemployed and those who have stopped looking for work are added in—the number of those with no health insurance increases day by day. Obama invokes the plight of the uninsured, with promises of a level of care not much above a pledge to pick up the dead bodies, in order to massively *cut health care costs*. Some $600 billion in savings is to come from reducing government spending on Medicare and Medicaid. Also being eyed for the ax by the health reform executioners are the now non-taxable employer-paid health programs won through the hard-fought union battles of the past. What are described as "gold-plated insurance" policies are not those of Wall Street CEOs, who have ready access to the best medical care money can buy, but the coverage available to many union members and their families. The current proposal by Democratic Senator Max Baucus is that the government levy taxes on these plans in the name of funding...health care!

Todd Bigelow

AFP

Above: Patients in crowded waiting room at a Los Angeles health center. Below: Patients at fairgrounds in Virginia being treated by volunteer dentists and support staff of Remote Area Medical, an organization that originally provided health services to underdeveloped countries.

The bitter reality of what is being palmed off as insuring the rights of all Americans to medical care was captured by liberal *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert (18 August), heretofore among the more vapid enthusiasts for Obama as "change we can believe in":

> "Insurance companies are delighted with the way 'reform' is unfolding. Think of it: The government is planning to require most uninsured Americans to buy health coverage. Millions of young and healthy individuals will be herded into the industry's welcoming arms. This is the population the insurers drool over.
>
> "This additional business—a gold mine—will more than offset the cost of important new regulations that, among other things, will prevent insurers from denying coverage to applicants with pre-existing conditions or imposing lifetime limits on benefits. Poor people will either be funneled into Medicaid, which will have its eligibility ceiling raised, or will receive a government subsidy to help with the purchase of private insurance.
>
> "If the oldest and sickest are on Medicare, and the poorest are on Medicaid, and the young and the healthy are required to purchase private insurance without the option of a competing government-run plan—well, that's reform the insurance companies can believe in."

The liberals, trade-union bureaucrats and reformist left plead for Obama not to abandon his promise of a "public option," i.e., a minimal government-funded program to compete with the insurance magnates, or maximally to institute a "single-payer" system as exists in Canada and much of Europe. All of this is predicated on the belief that the capitalist state, the very purpose of which is to defend the profits and rule of the bourgeoisie, can be made to serve the interests of those the capitalist rulers exploit and oppress.

The national health care programs that exist in other industrialized countries were instituted to placate combative working classes. While representing real gains, these programs have been consistently whittled away according to both the budgetary considerations of the capitalist rulers and the overhead they deem necessary to rein in working-class struggle. Under capitalism medical care is rationed to all but the few who can afford to buy it. This does not change when the bosses' state becomes the administrator.

"Big Government": A Racist Rallying Cry

Free, quality medical care for all should be an elementary right. But achieving that will require a genuine socialist assault by the multiracial working class to rip the "health" industry out of the hands of the profit-gorged insurance giants and drug

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For Free, Quality Health Care, Including for All Immigrants!
For Free Abortion on Demand!

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On Sports, Steroids and Race

11 August 2009

Editors,

Last Saturday (8 August) I intently listened to a press conference in which David "Big Papi" Ortiz and the Major League Players Association General Counsel Michael Weiner spoke to the issue of steroid use in baseball and the continuing victimization of Major League ball players by the Commissioner's office, the U.S. Government and the media. Ortiz flatly stated he did not use any banned substances but rather bought vitamins and supplements across the counter.

To many of us following the turmoil surrounding the issue of the use of banned substances by Major League ball players this appearance of Ortiz, a well liked and respected player (except, of course, in New York), publicly fighting back against scurrilous and career damaging attacks with his union representative at his side was a positive event. For the last 4 or 5 years not a week goes by when some hack politician or corporate media flak has not attacked the baseball accomplishments and integrity of some Major League ball player. Obviously the bourgeoisie is attempting to intimidate the youth of this country by demonizing steroid use ***and*** attacking the Players Association.

I, for one, could care less what a baseball player does with his body. I don't hear any puffed-up politician or corporate media hack bemoaning the fact that Hollywood has plastic surgeons on speed dial to perform a breast implant, butt enhancement, hair implant, face lift or whatever some star thinks it will take to get him or her in front of the camera. We all know of one Governor who "enhanced" his way to stardom and I don't hear many complaints from the horse racing industry about all the drugs and supplements given to jockeys and horses to keep the weight down or the speed up.

Most of us have no doubts that a lot of the bad publicity and attacks are racially motivated as the persecution of Barry Bonds makes clear. Personality aside Bonds was the most feared batter of his era and has now been effectively blackballed from baseball before he could reach 3,000 hits, faces Federal charges and has had his name and career disparaged by every two-bit journalist in the country. The man has won ***seven*** MVP's, hit 762 home runs and intimidated opposing managers so much he was intentionally walked *with the bases loaded* more than once. Fact is that the baseball and sports establishment does not like to admit that Henry Aaron and Barry Bonds, Black players, both broke the most hallowed record in American sports. The game of baseball is entertainment not life or death and management will promote whatever it takes to put butts in the seats and money in the till. (Just ask U.S. Senator Jim "Buckles" Bunning who in his Major League pitching days was known to groove the baseball with the help of his uniform belt buckle to give him an edge on the mound.)

I could say a lot more on this issue because baseball is dear to my heart and has been since the 50's when Mantle, Berra and Whitey Ford were playing on the transistor radio stashed under my elementary classroom desk. The bourgeoisie has corrupted everything they touch with the climate of greed they promote and now want to act as if they are crusading protectors of the youth of the country when we know that some of them rank right up there with the most slimy banker or derivatives trader. Just sending this along to you in the hopes it might elicit an article on the subject.

Yours in struggle
For Pete Rose and Barry Bonds in the Hall of Fame
A Revolutionary Socialist and Baseball Fan

Sports Illustrated

Barry Bonds

TROTSKY

Trotskyists and the Second World War

LENIN

Bourgeois scribblers and reformist swindlers falsely assert that the Second World War, which began in September 1939, was a battle for "democracy against fascism." In fact, World War II was driven by the same underlying economic impulse as the First World War: the struggle among the imperialist powers to seize new arenas of exploitation around the planet and to defend their existing ones. Against the tide of reactionary patriotism, Trotskyists carried out their internationalist duty to rally the proletariat in its own class interests: standing for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, a workers state despite its Stalinist degeneration, and opposing all the imperialist combatants in that carnage—a position for which U.S. Trotskyists were imprisoned in 1941. We print below excerpts from a resolution adopted by the Eleventh Convention of the American Trotskyist movement in November 1944 that was originally printed in Fourth International, *published by the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party.*

When the United States entered the second World War, Roosevelt, chief spokesman of American capitalism proclaimed that this war was a crusade for democracy, for the "Four Freedoms," for the destruction of fascism and totalitarianism. The labor bureaucrats, recruiting sergeants for the war machine, volunteered their services to sell the war as a conflict between "free labor" and "slave labor."

After three years of America's participation in the war, the demagogic slogans under which the people were dragooned into the slaughter have been stripped bare. Democracy and freedom are among the first casualties of the war. The slogans of "national unity" and "equality of sacrifice" are a snare. The pledges to take the profits out of war to prevent a new crop of wartime millionaires, are proved a monstrous hoax.

The capitalist government logically began its reactionary campaign by striking its first blows at the class-conscious vanguard of the American working class. On the very day war was declared, December 8, 1941, sentence was passed on the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party. They were convicted under the anti-labor Smith "Gag" Act for their uncompromising and outspoken opposition to the war program and because of their firm adherence to the principles of revolutionary Socialism. The conviction and imprisonment of the 18 was accompanied by a whole series of measures designed to throttle the unions and paralyze labor's resistance to the onslaught of Big Business.

The right to strike, basic to the freedom of the labor movement, has been virtually outlawed. Workers have been frozen to their jobs at frozen wages while the cost of living continues to rise. A "modified" version of forced labor has been imposed by executive decree. An increasing weight of taxes is being saddled on those least able to pay while corporation profits soar to the highest levels in history.

The war immediately strengthened the most reactionary groups and institutions. The surge of reaction, especially the persecution of minorities and the spread of race-hatred, is a wartime continuation of tendencies inherent in capitalist decay. Brutal discrimination and humiliating segregation of the Negro people in the armed forces as well as in civilian life reduce the slogans of "democracy and freedom" to a hideous mockery for 13-million American citizens. The wave of anti-Semitism unloosed by capitalist reaction has already risen to alarming proportions. Jim Crowism and anti-Semitism march hand in hand with the assault against the organizations of the working class. This is the reality behind the demagogic facade of the "Four Freedoms."

Prior to America's entry into the war, this reactionary trend was analyzed and forecast in the Manifesto of the Fourth International on *The Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution* which stated:

"*Seeking to gain the advantages of a totalitarian regime, the imperialist democracies launch their own defense with a redoubled drive against the working class and the persecution of revolutionary organizations. The war danger and now the war itself is utilized by them first and foremost to crush internal enemies. The bourgeoisie invariably and unswervingly follows the rule: 'The main enemy is in one's own country'.*"

—"The U.S. and the Second World War," *Fourth International* (January 1945)

White House Sacks Mumia Supporter

White House "green jobs" advisor Van Jones was unceremoniously dumped by the Obama administration on Labor Day weekend, nominally over his signing a 9/11 conspiracy-theory petition in 2004 calling for an investigation of the Bush administration. Jones's resignation had been preceded by a weeks-long campaign by Fox News attack dog Glenn Beck that escalated after ColorOfChange.org, a group Jones helped launch in 2005, organized an advertising boycott campaign of Beck's show to protest his calling Obama a "racist." The ravings of Beck and the right-wing blogosphere claimed (falsely) that Jones is some kind of closet black radical or even a "Marxist."

In 1994 Van Jones, one year out of Yale Law School, helped form the now-defunct San Francisco Bay Area group STORM (Standing Together to Organize a Revolutionary Movement). Despite its radical pretensions, STORM's liberal activism was neither "Marxist" nor "communist." In the following decade, Jones moved on to become a "green jobs" anti-poverty advocate who embraced the capitalist market. He wrote a 2008 best-selling book, *The Green Collar Economy*, and subsequently took a post with the Obama government. The right-wing drumbeat over his long-ago left posturing and the more recent 9/11 petition was an embarrassment to the Democratic White House. But Van Jones became an intractable liability when, as the *Washington Post* (6 September) noted, "his advocacy on behalf of death-row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal...threatened to develop into a fresh point of controversy."

Mumia is an innocent man who has been imprisoned on death row for nearly three decades. A former Black Panther Party spokesman and supporter of the Philadelphia MOVE organization, he was framed up and convicted of the 1981 killing of Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. Since then, one court after another has refused to even consider the massive amount of evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot Faulkner (see Partisan Defense Committee Fact Sheet *Big Lies in the Service of Legal Lynching*).

As Marxists, we don't care whether or not Obama has Van Jones in his administration. And it's hardly surprising that Obama would dump anyone even remotely associated with Mumia, a man the American ruling class wants to see entombed for life or dead. Yet reformist groups like Workers World Party (WWP), which hailed Obama's election as "a triumph for the Black masses and all the oppressed" (*Workers World*, 20 November 2008), appeal to the White House for "justice" for Mumia. A September 9 e-mail by a leading member of the

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Canada: Reformists and the Quebec National Question

Trotskyists Say: Independence for Quebec!

The following article originally appeared in the Young Spartacus *pages of* Spartacist Canada *No. 162 (Fall 2009), newspaper of the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League.*

Last December's Quebec elections gave a first parliamentary seat to Québec Solidaire (QS), a petty-bourgeois nationalist formation posturing as a "left" alternative to the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois [PQ]. QS leader Amir Khadir's victory in Mon-

SPARTACIST CANADA

treal's Mercier riding [electoral district] was feted by most of the reformist left, which in Quebec is largely buried within QS. Not even laying claim to working-class credentials (much less socialist ones), QS employs rhetoric about "social justice" to attract PQ supporters dissatisfied with the big-business policies of that party, keeping them firmly in the grip of bourgeois nationalism.

We Trotskyists call for Quebec independence in order to remove the roadblock of national antagonisms that divides the workers of English Canada and Quebec, poisoning prospects for united class struggle against capitalism. We agree with Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin that "a proletariat that tolerates the slightest coercion of other nations by its 'own' nation cannot be a socialist proletariat" (*Socialism and War*, July-August 1915). First and foremost, we fight against the Maple Leaf chauvinism that dominates in the English Canadian working class. At the same time, calling for independence helps combat nationalism in Quebec by giving Marxists a hearing to win Québécois workers away from their nationalist misleaders.

In contrast, the reformist left groups adapt everywhere to their "own" bourgeois exploiters. In Quebec, the pseudo-socialists who support QS—Gauche Socialiste, Parti Communiste du Québec, etc.—betray the interests of the working class by propping up this would-be "left" instrument of the Quebec capitalists. These groups endorse Québécois nationalism outright as some kind of "progressive" force. For example, they support Quebec's restrictive language laws, which among other things force children of immigrants to attend the French-language school system in order to "preserve the culture."

In English Canada, the same reformist groups back the social-democratic NDP [New Democratic Party], a party that due to its fealty to the Canadian capitalist rulers has always been hostile to Quebec's national rights. The NDP joined the forces of "Canadian unity" in the 1980 and 1995 Quebec sovereignty referendums and endorsed Ottawa's anti-democratic Clarity Act, which legally entrenches the denial of Quebec's right to self-determination. Back in 1972, then-NDP leader David Lewis applauded the jailing of union leaders during the semi-insurrectionary Quebec general strike, which saw workers take over and run whole towns.

Maclean's

Chauvinist 1995 "Canadian unity" rally in Montreal. IMT's Fightback, Bolshevik Tendency ape Canadian rulers by opposing independence as "divisive."

Many left groups in English Canada at least try to mask their reformism by opposing the NDP's "national unity" chauvinism over Quebec. But the "Fightback" group, affiliated with Alan Woods' International Marxist Tendency (IMT), is an exception. While claiming to defend Quebec's right to self-determination, they *oppose* Quebec independence as "divisive." Spouting rhetoric about the need to "unite and fight," they intone condescendingly that "an independent capitalist republic" of Quebec "would only isolate the workers of Quebec further from the workers on the rest of the continent, and leave them more vulnerable" (marxist.ca, 1 November 2005). Such specious arguments in defence of "Canadian unity" could easily emanate from the English Canadian union tops (the Canadian Labour Congress also has a paper line for Quebec's right to self-determination).

Whatever the conjunctural sentiments, the Québécois have long asserted their national distinctness; they have compacted a distinct political economy with a francophone bourgeoisie that oppresses its "own" working class, one that also integrates new immigrants. The 1995 Quebec sovereignty referendum only lost (by less than one percent) due to military and economic intimidation and outright fraud by the "federalist camp" run by the government in Ottawa. "United Canada" has long been a poisonous, artificial construct that *exacerbates* the divisions between English- and French-speaking workers, divisions that are further fuelled by the labour misleaders in both nations who rally the workers behind their "own" capitalists. Quebec independence would not, of course, put an end to capitalist exploitation. But it would remove a major obstacle to making the working class conscious of the need for struggle against their own exploiters.

Fightback's purpose has nothing to do with furthering the class struggle, and everything to do with channelling workers' struggles onto reformist shoals. In English Canada, their main activity is to call for the pro-capitalist NDP to take office "on a socialist program." In Britain, the IMT's parent group has long been buried in the ruling New Labour Party. In all cases, they look to the ***capitalist state*** as the instrument to bring about socialism. This flies in the face of the Marxist understanding of the bourgeois state as an organized instrument for the suppression of the working class. As Lenin explained, the workers cannot lay hold of the existing state apparatus and wield it for their own purposes, but must smash it and replace it with their own working-class state, the dictatorship of the proletariat. This perspective was vindicated when the Bolsheviks led the Russian workers to power through socialist revolution in October 1917, and it is what we fight for today.

A Quebec NDP?

Fightback was among the many groups who greeted Amir Khadir's parliamentary victory with wild enthusiasm. At a QS congress in June, the spokesman for their Quebec affiliate around the newspaper *La Riposte* gushed that "the IMT considers the election of the first QS MNA [Member of the National Assembly of Quebec] as the biggest political event in Quebec since the Common Front general strike of 1972"! After this shameless (and historically demented) piece of flattery, *La Riposte* received formal status as a "collective" within QS.

In joining QS, Fightback (like Gauche Socialiste et al.) crossed the class line into an organization that stands outside the workers movement. This is hardly news nowadays when most of the left internationally, having hailed the counter-revolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, has accommodated itself to the "death of communism" rhetoric of the imperialist ruling classes. The IMT is long practiced in overt class collaborationism: their affiliate in Pakistan is buried inside an outright bourgeois party, the Pakistan Peoples Party, while in Venezuela they enthuse over the bourgeois populist Hugo Chávez, a former military commander whose capitalist government they paint in "revolutionary" colours.

In an April 2007 web posting, Fightback wrote: "Solidaire cannot just be a party of the petit-bourgeois academic Montréal left with less than 6,000 members—it must become a mass party of the Québec working class, based on the unions, that fights on the streets, on the picket lines, and in elections." In other words, they want QS to become an NDP *à la québécoise*. This is made explicit in another Fightback statement, which calls

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Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, October 22, 6:30 p.m.

60th Anniversary of the 1949 Chinese Revolution and the Contradictions of China Today

Defend the Chinese Deformed Workers State Against Imperialism!
For Workers Political Revolution to Oust the Beijing Bureaucrats!

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks E

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Thursday, September 24, 7:30 p.m.

Meet the Marxists

Hunter College, West Building, Rm. 411

For more information: (212) 267-1025
nysl@iiac.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, September 30, 6 p.m.

Capitalist Economic Crisis: Karl Marx Was Right

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 2119
100 St. George Street

Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

LOS ANGELES

Wednesday, October 7, 6 p.m.

Meet the Marxists

UCLA, Haines Hall A78

For more information: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

VANCOUVER

Thursday, October 8, 6:30 p.m.

Financial Crisis: Bankruptcy of Capitalism

University of British Columbia
SUB Room 42V

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

NY Public Library

Documentation Française

Left: Battle of Lexington on 19 April 1775 marked beginning of American Revolution. Right: Slave auction in Richmond, Virginia, 1856.

SLAVERY AND THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

We print below, in slightly edited form, Part Two of a presentation by Jacob Zorn to a Spartacist League educational in New York on 30 March 2008. Part One of this talk, published in WV *No. 942 (11 September), focused on the centrality of black chattel slavery to the early development of capitalism.*

PART TWO

I want to talk about the American Revolution, which we don't write about all that much. I think there are two essential pitfalls in dealing with the American Revolution. One was shown most fully by Earl Browder, the head of the Communist Party (CP) during its popular-front phase in the mid 1930s. In *What Is Communism?*—the same book in which he tried to show that "Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century"—Browder argued that the American Revolution of 1776 was essentially the model of the popular front. (There's a novel by Howard Fast called *Citizen Tom Paine*, written during World War II, where he also makes this argument, that Tom Paine came up with the idea of a popular front against British colonialism.) The second pitfall is to pretend that the American Revolution isn't really important at all.

There's a *WV* article that was part of the readings, called "Why We Don't Celebrate July 4" [*WV* No. 116, 2 July 1976], which is very useful. But just because we don't celebrate the Fourth of July doesn't mean that we think the revolution was unimportant. The revolution was, so far as it went, both important and progressive—the main thing is that it didn't go all that far. The American Revolution was a bourgeois revolution in the sense that it laid the basis for the development of American capitalism, but keep in mind that Britain in 1776 was not a feudal society—the English Civil War had happened more than 100 years earlier. Socially, the revolution was an alliance between the planter elites of the Southern colonies, which obviously were based on slavery, and the merchants of the Northern colonies because both of them wanted to break away from the constraints of British mercantilism. Thus, the revolution spurred not only the development of American capitalism, but also the development of the slave system in the South. The revolution itself cemented the alliance between capitalism and slavery, an alliance that would later—to borrow a phrase from the *Communist Manifesto*—have to be burst asunder. But one of the interesting points about the American Revolution is that this relationship was almost not burst asunder. The revolution did not solve the question of which of these two systems would dominate; and in that sense, the Civil War really was the Second American Revolution. This is another part of the answer to comrade Foster's question: Why did there need to be a Civil War? I think the American Revolution kind of set it up, in that sense.

I want to talk about the political significance of the revolution, however. Many of the ideals of the revolution, which drew upon the Parliamentary side of the English Civil War, are, in and of themselves, important. The right to bear arms, the separation of church and state, representative democracy, republicanism and colonial independence are good things. It's worth reading *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine. Some of these ideas were quite radical for the time—and I would just remind comrades that in Britain there is still both a crown and an established church. Plus, the founding fathers were by and large secular. I don't think that if George Washington had said that God had told him to fight England that people would have taken him seriously. That's another point that our article on the Fourth of July makes—that even by bourgeois standards, the leaders of the American Revolution stand several heads and shoulders above the current leaders.

The Nature of the American Revolution

The American Revolution, however, was not a social revolution, unlike either the French or the Haitian revolutions that immediately followed it. The question of the revolution was not whether the goal of the colonies was to be capitalist, or to make money, but for whom the colonies would be making money. It is important to keep in mind that of all the British colonies in America, the West Indies—the so-called "sugar colonies"—were much more important than the mainland North American colonies. The Northern colonies, as Eric Williams describes, essentially existed to provide food and other supplies to the Caribbean colonies. They preferred importing food, even at very high prices, from North America to wasting land that could otherwise be used for sugar. And in an earlier book, *The Negro in the Caribbean* (1942), Williams described how even then, most of the fish eaten in the Caribbean was imported from elsewhere, even though obviously the Caribbean is made up of islands. And the West Indian planters were a powerful section of the British ruling class, including many representatives in Parliament. So Parliament was not going to do anything that would harm the interests of these planters.

Under British mercantilism, there were basically two ways that the North American colonies were important to Britain. Under the Navigation Act of 1651, and later the Molasses Act of 1733, they were supposed to trade only with other British colonies. For the North, these acts were largely dead letters; they traded with whomever they wanted to trade. Northern merchants regularly bought molasses from French colonies, which tended to be more productive and sold cheaper, and they sold rum and other products—made directly or indirectly from slave labor—to non-British colonies. The planters in the South were expected to sell tobacco only to the British, but they found ways to get around this. The other important role of the North American colonies was to pay taxes. And tobacco was taxed at this time, in much of the 18th century, not by its value (i.e., by the price), but by how much was actually grown, so that as the planters' profits declined, their taxes often still increased. So, in much of the 18th century, even though the sugar colonies were much more profitable, they paid much less in taxes than did Virginia. And Virginia, in fact, paid more taxes to the royal treasury than any other colony. Nonetheless, for most of this period, the British government had a policy that was called salutary—or benign—neglect, allowing the colonies to ignore much of the mercantile laws while the colonies ran themselves.

This all changed at the end of the Seven Years (or the French and Indian) War, in 1763, which, in America at least, was fought in part over control of the Caribbean and French Canada. It was very complicated, and in some ways perhaps the first world war, drawing in every European power. But two trends merged at the end of this war. Britain ended the war with immense holdings in North America, with a large empire, and the newly crowned George III wanted to reassert a vigorous role for the British Crown. But the British were broke after the war and looked to America as a way of paying for this. As the *Encyclopedia Britannica* puts it, the British "felt that the colonies were ungrateful children, ready to profit from the security our arms had gained for them, but unwilling to pay the price."

So Parliament and George III, in a rather ham-handed way, passed a series of laws regarding the colonies (if you remember ninth grade, you probably went through them). But the bottom line is that these laws convinced both the American planters in the South and the merchants in the North that as long as they continued to remain a part of the British system, they would not be able to develop in the way that they wanted. And slavery was central to all of this, both because the main product that was being sent from Virginia—tobacco—was made with slave labor, but also because sugar and other things that were being traded in the North were an integral part of the Triangle Trade between Europe, the American colonies and Africa.

Slavery and the American Revolution

There is a great article that deals with the American Revolution in *WV* No. 764, called "The Haitian Revolution and the American Slavocracy." Many comrades don't remember it because it was published on September 14, 2001, but it explains how the American Revolution did not involve a social revolutionary component that was equivalent, for example, to the *sans-culottes* in France. It did not fundamentally change the class structure of the United States. But in order to mobilize the mass of the white populace—small farmers, artisans, shopkeepers—to risk their lives and livelihoods against Britain, the wealthy colonial elites had to tell them that all men, having been created equal, were entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

One of the key ways they were able to do this was through the institution of slavery, and the American rulers could give political rights to whites because the central labor force in the American South was slaves, who were excluded from all this. This is one of the reasons that there was no regime of plebeian terror

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in the American Revolution as there was in France; there was no Robespierre or, as in the English Civil War, Cromwell. Famously, in writing the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, himself a slaveholder (he owned about 200 slaves), had put in some mild anti-slavery language, blaming George III for supporting the slave trade. This was taken out at the insistence of the slaveholders. That is to say, slavery couldn't be touched.

From the revolution until the Constitution was adopted, the law of the land was what is called the Articles of Confederation. They allowed each state to regulate its own affairs, including whether to have slavery or not—this is the concept which later is called "states' rights." Earl Browder, in the same piece I referenced earlier, wrote that the Constitution was a "*counter-revolution* engineered by Alexander Hamilton." (Given that this was about the same time that Browder was defending the Stalinist Moscow Trials in the USSR, his idea of a political counter-revolution might be somewhat suspect.) The CP fundamentally preferred the side of Jefferson—their school here in New York City, for example, was called the Jefferson School of Social Science. Jefferson liked to talk of individual liberties, and in some ways he is one of the more eloquent spokesmen for the American Revolution. But the system that was set up was really a cover, to a large degree, for slavery. Jefferson's traditional enemy is considered to be Alexander Hamilton, and there are a lot of bad things about Alexander Hamilton, I suppose—he was willing to sacrifice political liberty upon the altar of bourgeois development, and he feared the people having too much power. But one of the key things was that he opposed slavery. If any of the founding fathers were vindicated by the Civil War, I think it was really Alexander Hamilton, who was in favor of a strong central government to develop capitalism, was opposed to slavery, and who also proposed arming blacks in the American Revolution, something that, again, the slaveholders opposed. Part of this is probably his own background, because he came from the British Caribbean and was intimately familiar with slavery.

Although the Constitution did represent a move away from the more egalitarian goals, or at least the rhetoric, of the revolution, it was carried out largely by the same men who made the revolution—as our piece in 1976 put it, they died of old age. It was not really a political counterrevolution in the same way that you can talk about Thermidor in the French Revolution, because there was not really a Robespierre in the American Revolution. The closest you would have, I guess, would be Daniel Shays, who in late 1786 in western Massachusetts rebelled against high taxes. It was fundamentally a different type of revolution.

The Constitution of 1787 was pushed by Alexander Hamilton in order to create a centralized government that would have the power to help create a unified, capitalist country. It was not very democratic, even if we exclude the question of slavery. In this context, I recommend section three in the July 2003 *amici curiae* (friends of the court) brief by the Partisan Defense Committee on Jose Padilla, which is called, "It Took a Civil War to Establish the Rights and Privileges of United States Citizenship." It makes the point that federalism—the so-called separation of powers, including between the states and the national government—really allowed slavery to exist until the Civil War. Therefore, the Constitution of 1787 codified the coexistence of two battling social systems, with the South given extra power.

I'm sure comrades have listened to, or at least read, Barack Obama's recent "A More Perfect Union" speech, where he argues that:

> "The answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution—a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law; a Constitution that promised its people liberty, and justice, and a union that could be and should be perfected over time."

Well, no, the Constitution actually made resolving this question short of a Civil War largely impossible. Also—it's interesting—when he lists all the bad things about the Constitution, he leaves out the most important part, which is the three-fifths compromise, which not only said that blacks are 60 percent human beings, but essentially gave the slave South control of the federal government. As Frederick Douglass put it in an article titled "The Constitution and Slavery" (1849): "Under it, the slave system has enjoyed a large and domineering representation in Congress, which has given laws to the whole Union in regard to slavery, ever since the formation of the government." Out of the three-fifths clause we also have the amazing contraption of the electoral college, which basically was designed to, and did, give the South the presidency, by giving more power to states that owned slaves. Some nine out of the first 15 presidents were Southerners, most from Virginia. So slavery was not, as Obama put it—and it's not just Obama, it's a common liberal myth—a "stain" on early American politics and society, but an essential thread woven throughout the development of American capitalism. It's a fundamental aspect, not extraneous or peripheral.

Library of Congress

Alexander Hamilton

E. Benjamin Andrews

September 1786: During Shays' Rebellion, armed band protesting foreclosures forced Supreme Court in Springfield, Massachusetts, to adjourn.

The Bill of Rights was adopted in 1791 in order to get the states to support the adoption of the Constitution, and this is what the Padilla brief calls the "Second Constitution." And these recognized important rights, but they still did not define any sense of national citizenship, something that would not come until the Civil War. In fact, one of the reasons that the framers didn't put these rights in the original Constitution is that they didn't want to start off saying that "all men are equal" again. That is to say, they didn't want to have anything that could be seen as challenging slavery. Of course, a point that is made in the Padilla brief and that we have often made since the "war on terror" began is that rights are not just granted by a piece of paper but also reflect what type of social struggle is going on in society.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

Mumia Supporter...

(continued from page 2)

moribund Bay Area group, Lahor Action Committee to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, dropped even a pretense to "labor action." Bemoaning the right-wing backlash, the e-mail explained that "a few current Mumia supporters" had thought that Van Jones could be prodded to "set Obama straight on Mumia's case" and "whisper something a bit more positive in Obama's ear." This is the same Obama who in 2008, while professing ignorance over Mumia's case, nonetheless assured right-wing radio broadcaster Michael Smerconish, "In my mind, if somebody killed a police officer, they deserve the death penalty or life in prison."

For years, the liberals and reformists have peddled illusions in the capitalist courts, calling for a "new," "fair" trial for Mumia from the very courts that knowingly convicted this innocent man. Today, with judicial appeals all but exhausted, they seek to place Mumia's fate in the hands of Obama and his Attorney General Eric Holder. The International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal (ICFFMAJ), the International Action Center, initiated by WWP, and the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) are all now petitioning Holder "to immediately commence a civil rights investigation to examine the many examples of egregious and racist prosecutorial and judicial misconduct." Obama's answer was to ax Van Jones.

While advocating that every legal avenue be pursued on Mumia's behalf, we have warned against illusions in capitalist "justice." Our fight to free Mumia and abolish the racist death penalty is rooted in the revolutionary perspective of winning the working class to the understanding that the bourgeois state is not some "neutral" agency that serves society as a whole but rather exists to defend the rule and profits of the capitalist class against the exploited and oppressed.

This perspective stands in sharp counterposition to the illusions peddled by the liberals and reformists. Outside the NAACP convention in July, where Obama and Holder were keynote speakers, the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) held a banner pleading: "Obama & Holder We Need You Now! Free Mumia." As we wrote in "Mumia Is an Innocent Man! Free Him Now!" (*WV* 941, 28 August):

> "Who are they appealing to? Obama is the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism—the most bloody and rapacious imperialist power on the face of the planet—and the overseer of the slaughter of countless peoples in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. His attorney general is the warden-in-chief of the prison dungeons holding political prisoners such as Mumia and over two million people, disproportionately blacks and Latinos. It would be hard to find a more savage indictment of the reformists' fundamental belief in the 'democracy' of capitalist class rule."■

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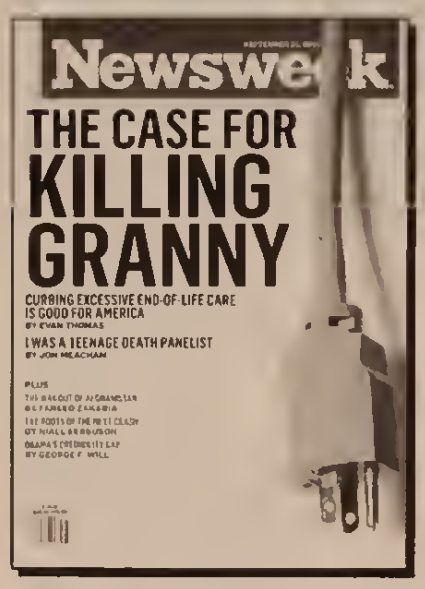
Socialized Medicine...

(continued from page 1)

companies. Only with the destruction of this entire capitalist system of exploitation, which measures human life in dollars, can the wealth generated by those who labor be committed to providing the highest level of medical care for all and eradicating the poverty and hunger that condemn countless millions to a life of misery, disease and early death.

Despite its Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration, the Soviet workers state, with its planned economy, was able to provide all with a job, housing, health care and education. An examination of the tragedy that has befallen the peoples of the former Soviet Union since capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92 speaks volumes about the "magic of the marketplace." In capitalist Russia today, millions are starving, more than 40 percent of the population lives in poverty, infant mor-



September 21 *Newsweek* cover story expresses ghoulish reality of capitalist "health" industry: Don't waste money on old people.

tality has skyrocketed and life expectancy has plummeted. It is equally telling that Cuba, once a backward neocolony of the U.S., has since the overthrow of capitalist/imperialist rule provided health care to all at a level comparable to that available in the U.S., despite the poverty of the island, enforced by the U.S. embargo and further exacerbated by the 1991-92 counterrevolution in the USSR.

There is plenty of justified fear and apprehension, especially among unionized workers and the elderly, over the current health care "reform" schemes. But the howls of the racist yahoos, bible-thumpers, militiamen and other reactionaries mobilized by the Republican right wing and their media shock jocks that Obama's plan is a prescription for a veritable "communist" takeover of America are genuine lunacy. At the same time, such lunacy is a very real reflection of the anti-black racism, anti-immigrant nativism and sexual bigotry that have long been wielded by the American bourgeoisie to preserve its class rule.

Obama is branded by the color of his skin, but he is also the top cop of American capitalism, responsible for enforcing a system built on the forcible subjugation of the majority of the black population at the bottom of society. Jimmy Carter—who in the 1970s openly proclaimed the virtues of "ethnic purity"—decried as racist South Carolina Congressman Joe Wilson's "you lie" outburst during Obama's speech to Congress. Carter's remarks are an expression of the appreciation by the more rational wing of the U.S. bourgeoisie of the necessity to uphold the credentials of America's first black president to effectively oversee their plantation, and extract further sacrifices from the working class, blacks, immigrants and the poor.

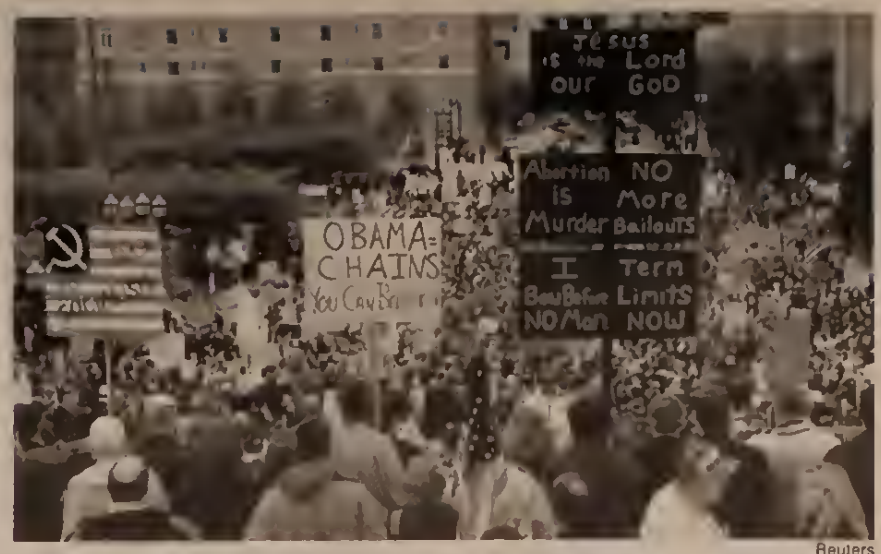
That the U.S. is the only major industrialized country on the face of the planet without a national health care program is, in large part, testament to how the race/caste oppression of black people has been used by America's rulers to divide and weaken the working class, furthering the exploitation of labor and the destitution of all the oppressed. In this country, cries against "big government" have long been synonymous with axing social programs such as health care and welfare by painting these as a drain on the tax dollars of "hard-working folks" to benefit the ghetto poor. Black people are always disproportionately hit by unemployment, poverty and lack of health care.

But what was first visited on the most vulnerable—single welfare mothers, desperate immigrants, people with AIDS—is now increasingly the reality for the working class as a whole. Thus, the fight for decent health care must link the fight for black equality with the struggle to end all injustice and exploitation. For full citizenship rights for all immigrants! For free abortion on demand and democratic rights for gays!

The lurid stories of government "death panels" that would order a shot of morphine to end granny's life are particularly demented in a country where pain-relieving opiates are parceled out in ever diminishing doses for the sick and dying. The same religious fanatics who terrorize abortion clinics and assassinate abortion doctors in the name of "life" are a moving force to ensure that you die in agony in the name of God, with campaigns against the right of those whose bodies are ravaged by incurable diseases to end their misery through assisted suicide. A sector of the Catholic hierarchy, which has been in the forefront in fighting against the right of the dying not to suffer, has been condemning the evils of health care reform as an assault on the "unborn" and on that most sacred right of all for the capitalist rulers of this society, private property.

Nevertheless it needs be recognized that the powers that be have little interest in continuing to fund "excessive" medical care for those reaching the end of their lives. One can be assured that the Brooke Astors of the world will be immune to such cost savings. At the same time, the ruling class plans to raise the retirement age to assure that Social Security is not too burdened by excessive longevity. Simply put, for the ruling class, Americans are living too long.

Obama has made clear that his plan would not provide for "illegal" immigrants and their families and that "no federal dollars will be used to fund abortions." This would be in line with the reactionary Hyde Amendment, signed into law by Carter in 1977, eliminating abortion coverage from Medicaid. Meanwhile, the situation for immigrants, who labor at the most dangerous and debilitating jobs, continues to worsen. In fact, since Obama took office, Homeland Security raids and deportations of immigrants have exceeded those carried out two years ago in a similar period under Bush.



Reuters

Nashville, Tennessee: Racist yahoos, bible-thumpers and other reactionaries at April 15 "Tax Day Tea Party."

The Labor Lieutenants of the Capitalist Class

Such health care benefits as the multiracial working class has won have been the product of militant class struggle against the exploiters. The dearth of strikes over the past decades helped pave the way for the bosses to butcher health care, pensions and other union gains with impunity. They have overwhelmingly gotten away with it thanks to the acquiescence of the union misleaders, who share the bosses' concern of maintaining the profitability of American capitalism.

Obama's election was celebrated as the arrival of the moment when things would be finally turned around in favor of the unions that had contributed $450 million to elect a Democrat to the White House. In fact, in his short time in office Obama has proved far more effective in gutting the unions than his Republican predecessor. Obama's appeals for "sacrifice" to salvage American capitalism from the most severe economic crisis since the Great Depression were readily saluted by United Auto Workers (UAW) leader, Ron Gettelfinger. In the assault on the UAW orchestrated by the White House to foot the bill for bailing out the auto bosses, Gettelfinger accepted worthless GM and Chrysler stock to fund over half the union's retiree health care trust. That is, he robbed medical care from aging workers whose years of backbreaking labor on the production lines were a serious and chronic detriment to their health, while those still working continue to see their health benefits massacred.

But perhaps the most flagrant expression of the trade-union bureaucracy's commitment to maintaining the profitability of American capitalism at the expense of the very lives of union members is the role played by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) leader Dennis Rivera. Describing him as Obama's "point man" on health reform, a *New York Times* (27 August) article reported that "Washington insiders are impressed and surprised that it was a union leader—Mr. Rivera—who forged a coalition including giant drug makers, the health insurers, the American Hospital Association and the American Medical Association that helped secure their pledges to cut hundreds of billions of dollars in costs." In bed with the Obama administration and the health industry, the trade-union bureaucrats betray the genuine concerns of their members and leave the field of protest open to the crazed, racist right wing.

Leading accomplices in a "health care reform" package that will mean the massive leveling down of medical care for union members and their families, the SEIU tops also readily acknowledge that these deadly cuts will cost the jobs of hospital workers. For his part, newly installed AFL-CIO chief Richard Trumka is "drawing a line in the sand" against Democrats who oppose the now all but dead "public option," according to the *Huffington Post* (18 August). Even in the unlikely event that a public option is included, it would be little more than a prescription for a health care ghetto for the most destitute, leaving the HMO and drug company moneybags with the whip hand.

NYCLU

Left: Esmin Green, a black 49-year-old woman, was ignored for hours as she lay dying on waiting room floor of Kings County Hospital Center in Brooklyn, June 2008.

AFP

Below: Health care workers and patients protest in Los Angeles against proposed cuts to California health system, May 22.

For the Socialist Reconstruction of America!

The situation cries out for a revival of labor struggle to defend and extend the health, pension and other benefits won through the class battles of the past. But that means getting rid of the labor traitors, who long ago junked the very class-struggle means through which the unions were forged. The road forward lies in building a new leadership of the unions, which will lead the vitally necessary battles against America's bourgeois masters. Such a leadership would lead the fight for free health care for all and for expropriating the health insurance and drug companies without compensation.

An article in the *Left Business Observer* (25 August) cited a founder of Physicians for a National Health Program who noted that CEOs who might privately support a single-payer health program are "reluctant to embrace it publicly for fear of encouraging would-be expropriators." The fear as he put it is: "If you

can take away someone else's business—the insurance companies' business—you can take away mine." And that is precisely what is needed—the expropriation of capitalist expropriators who have looted the wealth of this country which was created by labor. For that, we need a revolutionary workers party, one which doesn't respect the property "values" of the bourgeoisie but instead leads a revolutionary assault on and overturns through socialist revolution this decaying system. Only through the establishment of a workers government and a planned economy can the tremendous wealth, resources and medical technology of this society be put to providing for the many, not for the profits of the few.

We reprint below an article originally published in *Women and Revolution* (No. 39, Summer 1991), journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League/U.S. Titled "Wealth Care USA," the article traces the history of medicine for profit in the U.S. and its roots in the class exploitation, racist reaction and sexual bigotry that are the foundation stones of American capitalism.

Women and Revolution

The Debate Over "Socialized Medicine"

Wealth Care USA

In 1948 that conservative bastion of wealth and prestige, the American Medical Association (AMA), smelled Armageddon in the air when Democrat Harry S. Truman won the presidential election. To the horror of organized medicine, prominent in Truman's platform was a proposal for national health insurance. Outraged by this dire threat to doctors' income and position, the AMA mounted what was at the time the most expensive lobbying effort in American history, running ads, publishing articles in the bourgeois press and sponsoring public meetings to stop this "creeping socialism." One pamphlet demanded in a typical flight of reactionary hyperbole, "Would socialized medicine lead to socialization of other phases of American life?... Lenin thought so. He declared, 'Socialized medicine is the keystone to the arch of the Socialist State'." (According to Paul Starr, in *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, the Library of Congress could not locate this quotation in Lenin's writings.)

Harry S. Truman, the imperialist Commander-in-Chief who dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the American Cold Warrior who presided over the Korean War, was undoubtedly mighty indignant at being tagged a Communist for a proposal to ensure that "our people would continue to get medical and hospital services just as they do now"—that is, subject to all the class, race and sex biases of this bigoted society. But in 1948 the AMA's intransigent opposition to any organized health plan perceived as a threat to "fee for service" private practice was already legendary. Since 1920 the AMA had denounced all such plans as the insidious doom of quality health care and had in 1938 attempted to destroy the Washington-based Group Health Association, a nonprofit cooperative providing health care to employees of the Federal Home Loan Bank. For this last the federal government had even moved to prosecute the AMA under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, but the AMA remained intransigent.

Truman's electoral promises soon foundered in the sweeping tide of anti-Communist McCarthyite witchhunting. Health insurance was "socialism" straight out of the Soviet constitution, according to Republican Robert Taft, who walked out of Senate hearings on Truman's bill. In 1948 even simple public health measures like fluoridated water were "Communist plots" to the McCarthyites.

Yahoo fears to the contrary, such plans had existed for decades in Europe *without* threatening the capitalist status quo. Rather, European politicians knew that welfare plans could help defuse class struggle, win votes and cement an alliance with the pro-capitalist "leaders" of the workers movement. Truman, like Roosevelt before him, was a member of that liberal wing of the bourgeoisie that seeks to soften a bit of the jagged edges of exploitation in order to better reap profits and make war.

Access to health care should be a simple democratic right, a necessity just like education, a place to live, a job. Like every other basic right worth having, decent health care must be *fought for* in hard class struggle. It was no accident of history that Truman made his proposal amid a bitter series of strikes by the United Mine Workers (UMW) for union-controlled health benefits, part of a massive postwar strike wave that swept millions of workers out of the factories and onto the picket lines. Working in the country's most dangerous trade, miners had been incapacitated by hideous rates of illness, crippled and killed by black lung disease. Notoriously corrupt company doctors had systematically whitewashed the severity of illness and injury. In 1946 Truman seized the mines when miners struck for a health and pension fund; in 1947 Congress passed the union-busting, slave-labor Taft-Hartley law, which specifically forbade union-controlled, company-funded welfare plans. But the miners struck again and again, defying government threats, until they won an unprecedented "cradle to grave" union-controlled health plan. While McCarthyite reaction killed Truman's insurance proposal, the miners' historic victory opened the way for other unionized workers to win health benefits. But the miners paid a big price for their victory: UMW head John L. Lewis made a deal with the coal bosses not to protest the loss of thousands of mining jobs to mechanization.

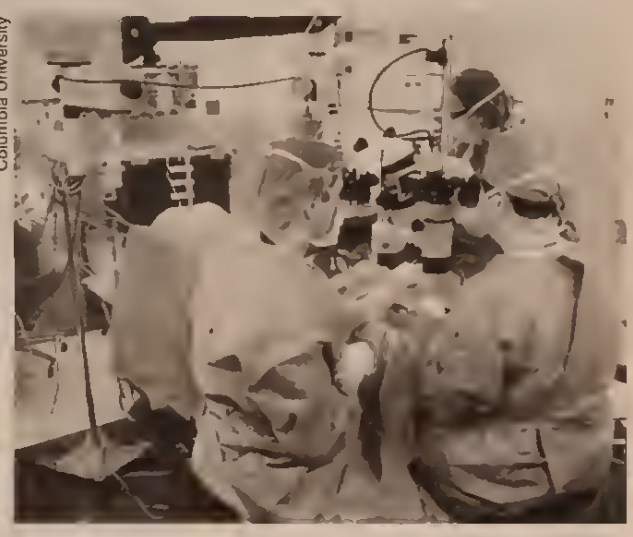
Medicine for Profit in Capitalist America

Today the U.S. crisis in health care is so bad that liberal social critics point out with alarm that the United States and apartheid South Africa are the only two industrialized countries in the world without a national health system of some kind. In America the grotesque inequities in medical care are a symbol of the injustice, inequality and indignity of this society. If you have money, you can get the best health care in the world, right on the cutting edge of the most advanced medical technology; that's why Saudi princes come to New York for medical attention. But if the bucks aren't there, and you don't have really good private insurance, you can suffer lifelong debilitation from treatable diseases like asthma or you can die when treatment could have saved your life.

Health "care" in America means black children in Harlem die of measles and malnutrition, and workers suffer one of the highest rates of on-the-job accidents and industrial disease in the world. Hospitals specializing in the wallet biopsy just throw poor patients out; the paltry Medicaid fee doesn't pay enough. "Until DeTar [Hospital] pays my malpractice insurance, I will pick and choose those patients that I want to treat," declared Michael Burditt, MD, when he rejected a seriously ill, pregnant Hispanic woman who had come to the emergency room; she ended up giving birth in an ambulance without a doctor's attention! But the millionairess Sunny von Bülow (whose story is told in the blood-chilling *Reversal of Fortune*), comatose for years and not expected to recover, gets a weekly coiffure and manicure in her hospital bed while space-age machines keep her breathing.

Our rulers know they're sitting on a bomb waiting to go off: for years now health care has been a major issue in strike after strike. Workers and their families are suffering and dying because they're denied care that touches on the most fundamental and the most intimate parts of life—sickness, birth and death. The health care disaster is having a widening impact on *all* sections of American society, except for the very rich. Even well-paid people, once relatively secure in a network of employer-provided health insurance, private physicians and well-run private hospitals, are threatened as companies cut benefits, doctors and hospitals raise rates, unemployment results in loss of health insurance.

The current health crisis has its more immediate historic roots in the economic crisis of U.S. capitalism signaled by the 1971 devaluation of the dollar, followed shortly by the U.S.'s humiliating defeat at the hands of the Vietnamese Revolution. Since then the American ruling class has sought to counter its decline by squeezing the population harder to restore profitability; domestically it's meant rampant union-busting and budget-cutting. Under Democrat Jimmy Carter the miners' historic "cradle to grave" health system was destroyed when the coal bosses and the government undermined union control in the bitter months-long Great Coal Strike of 1978. And Ronald Reagan opened a decade of union-busting attacks when he fired the PATCO air controllers for daring to strike against the federal government. That defeat signaled a broad capitalist assault on hard-won union benefit programs.



Columbia University

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Acme

Militant coal miners in 1948 thumbed their noses at slave-labor Taft-Hartley Act (left). Washington, D.C., 1981: 10,000 protest President Reagan's cutbacks in benefits for miners with black lung disease (below).

WV Photo

The bankrupt American empire thinks it can solve its economic crisis through military adventures like the bloody imperialist war in the Persian Gulf. While spending billions to bomb Iraq back to a pre-industrial age, our rulers decide this country can't afford health, education, housing, jobs for American workers and the poor. With the decline in American industry, they don't need a healthy, literate working class. But even on their own terms, where dollars count more than human lives, the bourgeoisie has a real problem: the anarchic medical system is out of control and costing too much money, so much so that even conservative holdouts like the National Association of Manufacturers are beginning to call for expansion of some government programs to cover the poor. Meanwhile, the U.S. government has announced plans to ration Medicare expenses, inevitably depriving the elderly of access to expensive new procedures.

Capitalist America: Class, Race, Sex Bigotry

Why does the United States have no national health system? Why is public health so feeble and preventive medicine nearly nonexistent? The answer is deeply rooted in this country's history. In the United States public health began late and remained weak. Until the Civil War

continued on page 8

Socialized Medicine...

(continued from page 7)

destroyed the slaveholding system, the capitalist class, impeded by the slavocracy in its attempts to institute a federal road system and to create a national bank and a protective tariff for industry, was certainly not going to forge a national board of health. Post-Civil War efforts foundered on "states' rights," intransigent capitalist opposition to cleaning up working conditions and slum tenements, and "social Darwinist" blame-the-victim bigotry.

Further, the power of the American capitalist class; the race, ethnic and sex divisions in the working class; the vastness of the country with the accompanying regional divisions; the absence of explicit, formal class barriers as in Europe with its aristocratic vestiges—all of these factors have served to vitiate the development of class consciousness in American workers. The same powerful class and social forces stymied the emergence of a mass workers party in this country. In Europe, the development of such a party, like Britain's Labour Party or the German Social Democracy, went side by side with the institution of national health care.

From 1912 to 1920 a debate raged in the U.S. in reform-minded and medical circles over federal and state proposals for government-organized health insurance. While the American Medical Association was prominent in defeating these proposals, it was only one factor in a complex web incorporating hospitals, insurance companies, the giant pharmaceutical corporations and government officials. The web was spun from the deep-seated class and race divisions in this country. Capitalists seeking to lower wages and benefits, commercial insurance companies reaping cash from insecurity and fear, pharmaceutical companies hungering for profits: in the absence of a powerful, class-conscious labor movement able to fight for basic social needs, which could at least have provided a social counterweight to the moneygrubbing in the health industry, these forces soon established an iron grip over health care in the United States. They used every weapon in the bourgeois arsenal of social reaction: anti-woman bigotry, religious and ethnic hatred, class bias, race prejudice, national chauvinism.

Race-hate, woman-hating, religious bigotry—that was America in the early years of the 20th century. The post-Civil War South, where Jim Crow had crushed the freed slaves into poverty, illness and ignorance, was virtually an impoverished agricultural colony of Northern capital. In 1915 the KKK was reborn in the lynching of Leo Frank, a Jewish businessman framed up for the murder of a white woman. In the brutal Northern industrial slums, thousands of mothers and infants died at birth each year. Working conditions were appalling: in 1914, 35,000 workers died in on-the-joh accidents; 700,000 suffered injuries like severed fingers and crushed limbs. In 1911, 147 young women, mostly Jewish and Italian immigrants, died horribly in the Triangle Shirtwaist fire in New York City; dozens leaped to their deaths because the bosses had them locked in. Bosses bitterly fought any regulation of safety conditions and the paltry workmen's compensation plans which had just become law in some states; many of these plans were declared null and void by the courts.

The American robber harons only counted the dollars flowing in as their "divide and conquer" assault on the working people raked in Wall Street profits. By pitting workers against each other, by bringing in desperate blacks as scabs to hreak strikes, hy fomenting chauvinist hatred of the millions of non-English-speaking immigrants on the job, the bosses had succeeded in crippling the workers movement. In the 1910s, less than 6 percent of American workers were members of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The Gompersite lahor lieutenants of the capitalist class organized their job-trusting unions *against* blacks, women, immigrants, feeding into antagonisms consciously fostered by the capitalists.

National Museum of American History

Medical students conduct a dissection at the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania, around 1890. As the medical profession gained prestige, women, Jews, immigrants and blacks were driven out.

While the American Socialist Party endorsed health insurance in 1904, it was increasingly a party of middle-class, white "reformers," alienated from more militant sections of the working class, many of whom were non-English-speaking immigrants. And the militant, class-struggle Industrial Workers of the World renounced "politics" on principle. Their mass base among migrant workers in the West, where they were crushed by the bosses and their government, lacked the potential clout of the industrialized workers in the Eastern cities.

History of the Health Insurance Debate

While working people lived and labored in brutal squalor, medicine was making miracles. When in the last decades of the 19th century Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch began to identify the pathogens responsible for many killer diseases, they began a bacteriological revolution which soon enormously increased medicine's effectiveness. The discovery of anesthesia and asepsis opened up enormous potential both for the relief of human suffering and for profit in hospital surgery. The demand for doctors' services and hospital beds—and the expense of medical treatment—soared.

By 1914 many European countries had passed some form of national health insurance. Far from comprehensive and certainly not free—only a fraction of the population was covered and workers had to pay some part of the cost out of their wages—these plans represented a significant reform within the confines of the capitalist system and were won as a concession to the combativeness of the European workers movement. In 1883, shortly after passing the Anti-Socialism Laws to squash the German Social Democratic Party, Bismarck instituted the first national sickness program:

> "Chancellor Otto von Bismarck created the German system of social insurance as a dike to hold back the rising tide of socialism. As he told a visiting British observer, he wanted 'to bribe the working classes, or, if you like, to win them over to regard the State as a social institution existing for their sake and interested in their welfare'."
>
> —Ronald L. Numbers, *Almost Persuaded: American Physicians and Compulsory Health Insurance, 1912-1920*

Insurance plans soon spread to Austria (1888), Hungary (1891), Luxemhourg (1901), Norway (1909), Serbia (1910) and even backward tsarist Russia (1912). More influential in the United States was the British National Insurance Act, put forward in 1911 by Liberal Party chancellor of the exchequer David Lloyd George, later British imperialist war leader. Consciously seeking to diminish class conflict by integrating the working class into a welfare system and to win workers' votes to the Liberal Party, Lloyd George summed up his hopes for health insurance with the comment, "You can not maintain an A-1 empire with a C-3 population" (quoted in Paul Starr, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*). When the British Medical Association threatened a boycott, the government succeeded in buying the doctors off with promises of physician control of local health committees and guaranteed remuneration.

Social reformers in the U.S. expected health insurance to sweep the U.S. as it had Europe. It was in tune with the spirit of Progressivism popular in liberal bourgeois circles before World War I. Seeking to "clean up" the worst abuses of capitalist exploitation (but blind to the hideous oppression of black sharecroppers in the Jim Crow South), Progressives argued for woman suffrage and for legislation to protect child and female labor. And they certainly realized that the illnesses of the poor were communicable to the rich; disease was rampant in the fetid working-class slums of the big cities, where tuberculosis, the "captain of death," spread in dusty sweatshops and filthy tenements without sunlight or fresh air. In motivating health insurance the American Association for Labor Legislation (AALL) emphasized that sickness was the leading immediate cause of "charity cases"; thus social relief enabling a sick person to keep his job would "reduce illness itself, lengthen life, abate poverty, improve working power, raise the wage level, and diminish the causes of industrial discontent." But despite such appeals to capitalism's "best interests," by 1920 health insurance was a dead issue.

Enter the Doctors

In 1847 a small group of physicians had founded the American Medical Association primarily as a means to combat "sectarians," that is, nontraditional physicians such as homeopaths, who were seen as a threat to the wealth and social position of the medical profession. (The AMA even denounced the Surgeon General of the U.S. for cooperating with a homeopathic physician to save the life of Secretary of State William Seward, when he was shot the night of Lincoln's assassination!) As a classic petty-bourgeois professional layer primarily engaged in private practice, doctors have no strategic social power in capitalist society. Their economic motive is simple: to charge as exorbitant a fee as they can squceze out of patients. Their social outlook is to avoid what has befallen teachers: proletarianization, the worst fear of a petty-bourgeois professional. In the key years 1890 to 1920—culminating in the victory of the bourgeois right wing—the AMA consolidated as a conservative force championing "fee for service" and opposed to any "third party" intervention in the "doctor-patient relationship."

Organized medicine boosted its prestige by becoming rich, white, WASP, native-born and male. Through "reform" of medical education, the AMA succeeded in cutting the number of medical schools from 131 to 95 in 1915 and reducing overall admissions to eliminate a "surplus" of doctors. Only two black medical schools, Howard and Meharry, remained out of an earlier seven. Deliberate policies of discrimination kept immigrants, Jews, blacks and women out of medical schools. By 1920 blacks and foreign-born doctors were almost completely unrepresented on hospital staffs. Ethnic, race and religious discrimination against both doctors and patients was a leading factor in the establishment of religious and ethnic hospitals like Mount Sinai in New York City.

Both North and South, hospitals were strictly segregated against blacks. The AMA itself was almost lily-white. While blacks could join on a national level, most doctors were members through a local medical association. Black doctors in the South were effectively barred; in 1895 blacks had established their own organization, the National Medical Association (NMA), which, reflecting the desperate needs of black patients, had a longstanding position in support of national health insurance. In 1950 the AMA finally moved to put token pressure on Southern locals to admit black doctors. But as Edward H. Beardsley wrote in *A History of Neglect: Health Care for Blacks and Mill Workers in the Twentieth-Century South*, "there was feeling among some blacks that the AMA was only hoping to strike a deal with the NMA over national health insurance. Earlier, AMA leaders had approached their black counterparts with a vague offer of recognizing black medical societies as AMA affiliates if the NMA would join against Truman's 'socialized medicine' scheme."

Public Health in America: Stillborn

As Harvard medical historian Paul Starr documents, doctors viewed public health as a threat and defended a "vigilantly guarded border" between private medical practice and public health's shrinking mandate. "Doctors fought against public treatment of the sick, requirements for reporting cases of tuberculosis and venereal disease, and attempts by public health authorities to establish health centers to coordinate preventive and curative medical services." Crying "parasitism" and "abuse," doctors were instrumental in banishing urban dispensaries, "medical soup kitchens" where the poor could be treated for free. Similarly, in April 1902 over 1,000 doctors and druggists denounced New York City's internationally renowned Department of Health for "unfair competition" and "municipal socialism" because it sold its overstock of diphtheria antitoxin at cost. The department was forced to stop all sale of the antitoxin for this hideous disease, one of the 19th century's biggest killers of children.

Thus, by 1912 when the Progressivist American Association for Labor Legisla-

Bettmann

In the Triangle Shirtwaist fire of 1911, 147 workers, mostly young immigrant women, dled In a garment industry sweatshop because the bosses had locked them in.

tion first set forth its proposals for health insurance on the state and national level, the AMA had some experience with getting its way. Interestingly, at first the AMA endorsed the insurance proposal as "inevitable." But soon doctors learned that its defeat was possible. According to Ronald L. Numbers:

> "During this period nothing seems to have played a greater role in molding opinion than money. In the early days of the debate, when poorly paid American physicians believed that they, like their British brethren, might benefit financially from compulsory health insurance, it seemed like an attractive idea.... [But] the incomes of physicians were increasing without insurance. The average income of taxed physicians in Wisconsin, for example, rose 41 percent between 1916 and 1919. Wartime inflation was responsible for much of this, but an unprecedented decline in the total number of physicians undoubtedly had some effect."

But more important than the position of the AMA was the clout of big business. Organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers and the National Civic Federation opposed compulsory insurance plans. An especially powerful enemy was the burgeoning commercial insurance business. The enormous profits of the Prudential Insurance Co. (founded in 1875) and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. sprang from selling "industrial" life insurance policies to working-class families. These grisly policies of death paid costs for terminal illnesses and funerals *only*. A huge army of insurance agents visited families weekly, immediately after payday, to collect the 15 or 25 cents premium, a very high percentage of a workman's pitiful wages. The fear of a pauper's burial was so great that in 1911 individual Americans spent $183 million on these burial policies—about as much as Germany spent on its entire social insurance program!

The AALL program's inclusion of death benefits directly threatened the life insurance giants, who proved its most bitter opponents. The chief spokesman for the insurance industry was Frederick L. Hoffman, Prudential actuary and vice president, who churned out pages of propaganda smearing compulsory health insurance as unnecessary, fraudulent and un-American. The insurance industry also financed the opposition of the Christian Science faith healers.

Faced with such powerful enemies, compulsory insurance needed powerful friends. But while some state union federations supported it, AFL head Samuel Gompers denounced it. When in 1916 Socialist Party Congressman Meyer London introduced a bill for compulsory health insurance into the House of Representatives, Gompers was the only witness to testify against it. In a hypocritical diatribe against government paternalism, Gompers claimed that compulsory insurance would stand in the way of the workers' attempts "to strive and struggle for their own emancipation through their own efforts." Of course the labor-traitor Gompers (who also opposed legislation for the eight-hour day, the minimum wage and unemployment insurance) did *nothing* to organize "striving and struggling" for the vast majority of workers, who were still unorganized. The job-trusting, Jim Crow AFL leadership was a criminal *obstacle* to workers power. The key element of organized class struggle, which both Bismarck and Lloyd George had sought to buy off with their social insurance schemes, was crippled in the United States. When the capitalists looked at the health care equation, they saw only that their bucks would go to premiums and to sick pay which they believed would only encourage "malingering."

Corbis

Impoverished AIDS patients await treatment in Nairobi, Kenya. AIDS epidemic in Africa is exacerbated by ravages of imperialism.

The final blow to the Progressives' reform plan was the entry of the United States into World War I in 1917. True, when hundreds of thousands of young Americans failed their army physicals, health reformers used military necessity to bolster their arguments for health insurance. But this appeal to chauvinism was swamped in imperialist war hysteria targeting radicals, antiwar militants, women's rights activists, socialists, unionists—any challenge to the U.S. war drive. Chauvinist reaction killed dead any chances for health care reform, while health insurance opponents reveled in its German connection. (In his 1918 address, the AMA's president called on AMA members to turn in German doctors to the cops.) The powerful witch-hunting Creel Committee on Public Information commissioned a series of articles by Frederick Hoffman "exposing" German sickness insurance as a "fraud."

The California League for the Conservation of Public Health (an Orwellian name indeed) propagandized in a pamphlet entitled "What Is Compulsory Social Health Insurance?": "It is a dangerous device, invented in Germany, announced by the German Emperor from the throne the same year he started plotting and preparing to conquer the world." A front group for California commercial insurers, the Research Society of Social Economics, passed out thousands of copies of a pamphlet displaying a picture of the Kaiser over the caption: "Made in Germany. Do you want it in California?" This disgusting chauvinist barrage turned Californian voters against insurance, which was defeated in a statewide referendum.

The 1917 Russian Revolution, greeted by the working-class masses as a beacon of hope amid imperialist slaughter and exploitation, gave the enemies of health insurance yet another inflammatory theme which only intensified in the postwar upsurge of anti-communist reaction. In 1919 a prominent New York physician-lawyer, John O'Reilly, screamed that health insurance advocates were "Paid Professional Philanthropists, and busybody Social Workers...Supporters, Defenders, Associates of the Forces of unrest known as the I.W.W. and Bolshevists; the disciples of Lenin and Trotzky whose Gospel is the Destruction of those things worth while for which men and women have given their lives." Others attacked insurance advocates using nasty anti-Semitic slurs and claims of "sexual license" and "religious hatred." Thus organized medicine played its small but dirty part to whip up the bloody crackdown on labor struggle after the war. Capitalist reaction spawned the union-busting, the anti-communist Palmer Raids, the mass deportations of foreign-born workers and the vicious race riots of the postwar years.

Bitter Fruits of "Wealth Care"

While the rise of the militant CIO in the 1930s paved the way for the establishment of union benefit plans like the UMW's, American medicine for profit, born in capitalist reaction, remains locked in to anarchic, limitless greed. When AIDS hit the U.S. in the 1980s, the response of the ruling class and the medical establishment was to be predicted: criminal neglect, outright gloating over a disease that targeted homosexuals as well, as increasing numbers of drug users and the poor. Medicine has become not only a source of enormous profit, but a sort of moral priesthood of the arrogant privileged sermonizing against the "guilty" who are sick for their sins; "public health" has turned into a criminal manhunt. In a truly vicious and twisted victimization of a young black woman, recently a Florida appeals court upheld the conviction of Jennifer Clarise Johnson under a law designed to punish drug dealers giving drugs to children: she supposedly delivered cocaine to her baby through the umbilical cord before it was cut after birth!

Today, about 34 million Americans have no health insurance at all—and that's not counting the tens of millions who have pitifully inadequate coverage like Medicare and Medicaid. Medicaid fees are so low that many doctors simply turn patients away—for a visit to a doctor in New York Medicaid paid $11 in 1989! For years death rates and infant mortality rates for black people have been worsening as poverty lashes them with malnutrition, wretched housing, lack of medical care. Ghettos are devastated by epidemics of diseases supposedly conquered by modern medicine: tuberculosis once again spreading; measles, easily prevented by vaccine, rampant because vaccinations for common childhood diseases, once free, now cost several hundred dollars. In contrast to every other industrialized country on the globe, in the United States sexually transmitted diseases are increasing: syphilis, once almost eradicated, now the cause of thousands of babies born with a terrible, crippling congenital condition; gonorrhea, now spreading in drug-resistant forms.

Just over a year ago in "Excess Mortality in Harlem," published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (18 January 1990), doctors reported that life expectancy for black men in Harlem was lower than for men in Bangladesh, one of the world's most impoverished countries. The two authors of the report concluded, "A major political and financial commitment will be needed to eradicate the root causes of this high mortality: vicious poverty and inadequate access to the basic health care that is the right of all Americans." But it has only gotten worse. Harlem Hospital, virtually the only health facility for the 125,000 inhabitants of Harlem (where private physicians are practically nonexistent), is faced with loss of accreditation and withdrawal of federal Medicaid and Medicare funding.

Conditions on the job have deteriorated too as the bankrupt American empire has intensified the exploitation of labor. Some 4,000 coal miners die every year from black lung disease, and 10,000 of the 160,000 miners on the job show evidence of the disease already. In February 1989 the so-called "Labor" Department of the U.S. government discovered widespread and massive cheating by mining companies in testing mine air for coal dust, the cause of the illness. After stalling for months while miners continue to get sick, the government finally announced fines

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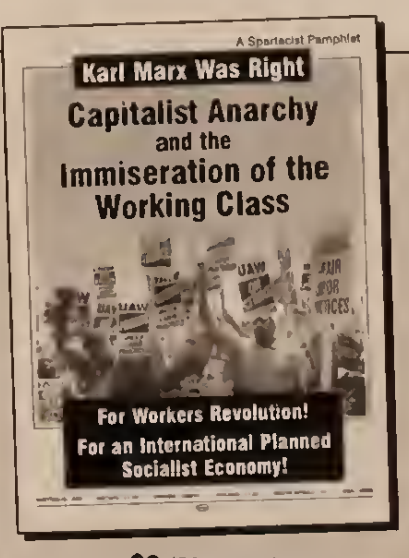

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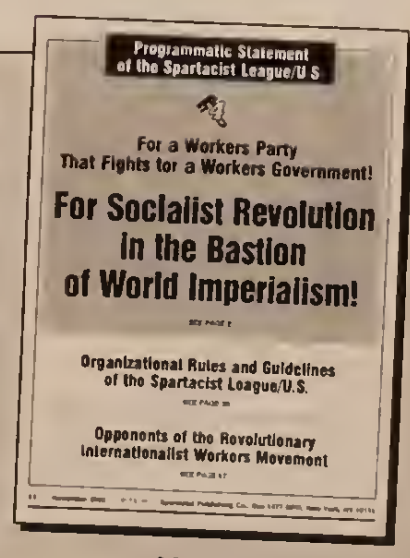

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Socialized Medicine...

(continued from page 9)

as low as $1,000 per violation, a meaningless slap on the wrist!

The health care "system" in the U.S. shows again and again that the capitalists don't want to let human life get in the way of their profits. Understandably outraged, ACT UP activists, through militant stunts like blockading Wall Street and protesting at Catholic masses, try to pressure government into putting more money into AIDS care and AIDS research. But only intransigent class struggle has won even the little piece of the "miracle of modern medicine" that workers and the poor now have. And as the miners' long years of struggle show, even those gains can be reversed by renewed capitalist attack.

Medicine for profit is too locked in for the American capitalists to implement a universal government-provided health system like the one in Canada or Britain. But even if it were possible, it's no answer either. In Britain, nobody who can afford a private physician's fees ever goes to National Health, and the already inadequate care is fast disappearing as the government slashes services. While the Canadian system provides better general health care to the population as a whole, many people can't get access to expensive procedures requiring high-tech medical equipment because there isn't enough money in the tight budget.

The struggle for decent health care exposes the gaping holes in all the pathetic patchwork reform schemes advocated by liberal social workers, social democrats and officials of the twin capitalist parties. The treacherous U.S. labor bureaucrats, the grandsons of Samuel Gompers, today pass motions calling for a national health system and argue about it at their fancy poolside confabs in Bal Harbour. But such schemes are just bandaids for cancer, more halfway measures guaranteed to ration medical care by class, race and sex. The AFL-CIO executive board couldn't even pass a motion to support women's right to abortion, let alone fight for equal rights for blacks, women and gays. The working class must oust the trade-union bureaucrats, the labor lieutenants of the Democratic Party—the party of Harry Truman and Jimmy Carter—and build a revolutionary, class-struggle workers party which will take up all the struggles of the exploited and oppressed, and fight for a workers government.

Free, Quality Health Care for All In a Socialist World!

The crisis of medical care cries out for a socialist revolution which will lay the basis for a society which will end all exploitation and social oppression. Health means much more than shots and pills and surgical knives: it is a decent place to live; plenty of good food to eat; knowledge of human biology; air clean of pollution; safe, decent working conditions; the principles of public health rigorously applied. Medicine can't save lives ruined by poverty and malnutrition. Right now a deadly epidemic of cholera is spreading rapidly throughout South America, the first since 1895. Its genesis is quite simply the collapse of the sewage system. Groaning under millions of dollars of debt to imperialist banks, Third World countries can't maintain even a basic social infrastructure.

In this complex industrial society, it will take *worldwide* planning based on scientific knowledge to establish both public health and the best care for the individual. The AIDS pandemic only underlines the urgency of this truth. What we need is ***free, quality health care for all—communist*** medicine, where the wealth of resources on our planet go to the service of the people, not to production for profits.

When we have thrown out the vicious capitalist system which sells human life for dollars, we will be able to build a new socialist society where human life, human worth and human dignity count. Doctors will be servants of the people; hospitals will be havens to heal the sick; research on vaccinations, new medical techniques and improved drugs will be internationally coordinated and to the benefit of all. When the workers of the world are in charge of this planet, the only limits of human health will be scientific—and these will be constantly enlarged by thoughtful, energetic research. ■

Iraq...

(continued from page 12)

and murder of gays are the work of the reactionary zealots who prowl the streets of Iraq, such crimes are incited and prepared by a vicious crusade demonizing homosexuality as "disgusting," a "disaster" and "delinquent behavior." In 2005, top Shi'ite cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani issued a religious decree to punish and murder gay men and lesbians "in the worst, most severe way of killing." Moqtada al-Sadr ordered that the "depravity" of homosexuality be eradicated. News media have bemoaned the "feminization" of Iraqi men, "endangered manhood" and "spread of the third sex."

Gays in Iraq are not the only victims under the imperialist occupation. Women, who at least in the cities enjoyed a relative degree of freedom under Saddam's regime, are driven off the streets, forced into the veil, beaten, raped, beheaded, stabbed, burned and stoned to death in the barbaric practice of "honor killing," now intensifying throughout Iraq. Their "crimes" include taking off the veil or falling in love with men outside their tribes. In Iraqi Kurdistan, touted by the capitalist media as a secular region, 17-year-old Du'a Khalil Aswad was stoned to death by a mob in the town of Bashiqa in 2007, with 2,000 men watching. She fell in love with a man outside her tribe.

Homosexuality and Arab Culture

In the Near East, the persecution of gays is not confined to Iraq. In March, a 44-year-old gay man was shot to death in Yemen, one of several gay men killed since 2008. Last year, Ahmet Yildiz, a gay physics student, was gunned down in Istanbul. In Iran, homosexual men and teenagers are frequently hanged. Iraqi gay men who sought refuge in Syria have been forced back across the border into the hands of their executioners. Last month, in the "democratic oasis" of Zionist Israel, a semi-theocratic state, a gunman sprayed a gay club with bullets in Tel Aviv, killing two people and wounding more than ten. As we wrote in "Protest Anti-Gay Persecution in Egypt!" (*WV* No. 801, 11 April 2003), following a vicious roundup of Egyptian homosexuals:

> "Across the Islamic crescent, from Morocco to Malaysia, homosexuality is a crime under Sharia (Islamic law), punishable by death in Pakistan, Iran, Yemen, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and 'liberated' Afghanistan, among others. It is a measure of the pervasiveness of anti-gay bigotry in these societies that there is no word in Arabic, Urdu or Farsi for homosexual that is not demeaning or derogatory."

The Near East has witnessed far more tolerant times in regard to homosexuality. During the golden days of Arab culture and learning in the centuries following the founding of Islam, one of the greatest poets of classical Arabic literature, Abu Nuwas (ca. 755–ca. 815) or "father of curls"—so named because he wore his long hair to his shoulders—was openly gay and a court poet. He was famous for his erotic lyrics on male love and wine, a theme that was picked up by the best poets of Persia and Arabia, such as Omar al-Khayyam, Hafiz and countless others. The collection, *A Thousand and One Nights*, originally included an erotic tale titled "Abu Nuwas and the Three Youths," which was removed from the 1930 English-language edition. A major boulevard in Baghdad is named after Abu Nuwas; now the reactionaries are planning to change its name.

Even in the 20th century, as Arab culture became increasingly insular and intolerant, there continued to be a current of toleration of homosexuality among major Arab intellectuals. The novels of Egyptian author Naguib Mahfouz, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988, often portrayed homosexual characters as human beings no different than others. Likewise, such portrayals were also common in the films of the late Egyptian director Youssef Chahine. In his classic 1978 film, *Alexandria... Why?* Chahine depicts a young Egyptian aristocrat who during the Second World War sought out a foreign officer to kill in an act of "patriotism." But when a young British soldier is delivered to him, they end up falling in love with each other. More recently, the 2002 novel, *The Yacoubian Building*, by Alaa Al Aswany and the 2006 film version have both been a subject of controversy in the Near East due to their positive portrayals of homosexual characters.

Marxists and Homosexual Rights

Whether in the benighted East or in the West, persecution and bigotry against gays are not simply a question of backward ideology; they flow directly from a core element of class society: the institution of the family. The family, with its entrenched patriarchy, is the main source of the oppression of women, youth and homosexuals in class society. It embodies societal gender roles that are then reinforced by religious moral codes. The institution of the family is key to capitalist society, which is built upon private property and domination of the ruling class over the workers and the oppressed. The family provides the mechanism through which private property is passed down to the next generation. Alongside organized religion, it acts as a conservatizing force, regimenting the population, teaching respect to authority and instilling a morality that proscribes anything perceived as a threat to the sanctity of the family.

We are virtually alone on the American left in our defense of gays in predominantly Muslim countries. Historically, Marxists have been strong defenders of homosexual rights. In a series of articles in 1895, Eduard Bernstein, a leader of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), condemned the trial of the great 19th-century writer Oscar Wilde, who was condemned to two years in prison by a British court for homosexuality. August Bebel, cofounder of the SPD, considered same-sex love as natural and aesthetically as noble as "normal" relations. Addressing the Reichstag (parliament) in 1898, he called for the repeal of the German criminal code against male same-sex acts.

But it was the Bolsheviks who gave flesh and blood to the Marxist understanding of the woman question and homosexual rights. At a time when the European capitalists were prosecuting homosexuals, the revolutionary Bolshevik regime that took power after the 1917 Russian Revolution laid the basis for the first time for real equality for women and eliminated all laws against homosexuality. As Dr. Grigorii Batkis, the director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene, wrote:

> "Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called 'natural' intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters. Only when there's use of force or duress, as in general when there's an injury or encroachment upon the rights of another person, is there a question of criminal prosecution."
>
> — quoted in John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)* (1974)

While many of these emancipatory principles were later reversed as the Stalinist bureaucracy sought to entrench itself in the USSR—in part by reinforcing the family and traditional social values—they inform our Marxist approach. For us the guiding principle for sexual relations is that of *effective consent*, meaning mutual agreement and understanding, as opposed to coercion. As long as those who take part agree to do so at the time, no one, least of all the state, has the right to tell them they can't do it. We oppose reactionary "age of consent" laws and have been the subject of slanderous attacks for our defense of NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association) in the U.S.

drawing by Khalil Gibran

Abu Nuwas (ca. 755–ca. 815), shown here in drawing by Lebanese poet Gibran Khalil Gibran, was one of the greatest poets of classical Arabic literature and openly gay.

Under capitalist rule, gays in Iraq will never realize the rights that their counterparts have gained in advanced bourgeois societies. At the same time, such democratic gains in the West are not only partial, but also reversible. Bible bigots, "family values" crusaders and other reactionaries serve to ensure that homosexuals in the U.S. and other Western countries continue to face violence, persecution and abrogation of their rights.

In terms of Iraq—a country forcibly cobbled together by British imperialism and populated by historically hostile ethnic and religious groups that are themselves further riven by clan and tribal rivalries—there is no basis for stable bourgeois-democratic rule. With their enormous social contradictions, Iraq and the Near East more generally present a powerful argument for Leon Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which found living confirmation in the Bolshevik Revolution. Trotsky's theory holds that in those countries where capitalism emerged belatedly, the tasks historically associated with the bourgeois-democratic revolutions of the 17th and 18th centuries can be carried out only under the class rule of the proletariat. Liberation from the imperialist yoke, which exacerbates backwardness and reaction, and the equitable resolution of the democratic rights of all peoples of Iraq and the region more broadly can be achieved only through the overthrow of capitalist rule in the region and the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East.

While proletarian rule will do much to end the oppression of women and homosexuals, routing the reactionaries, the final eradication of oppression cannot be realized before the family is replaced in a communist society. To finally arrive at classless communism requires the destruction of capitalist imperialism as a world system and the establishment of a world socialist division of labor, leading to a tremendous leap in the productive forces that can provide material plenty for all. Our task is to build revolutionary workers parties of the Bolshevik type that will act as tribunes of the people, defenders of all the oppressed, leading the fight for world socialist revolution, laying the material basis for the eradication of the oppression of women and gays ■

Canada...

(continued from page 3)

on QS and the NDP to "unite together on a program demanding full employment, free education, better health care and an end to the war in Afghanistan" (marxist.ca, 10 October 2008).

In the past, all manner of small social-democratic groupings in Quebec have tried to cohere a mass reformist party based on the Québécois working class—and all have failed. With the national question weighing so heavily on all aspects of political life, the Quebec bourgeoisie has not felt the need for a social-democratic formation to mislead the workers. Supported by the union tops, the bourgeois *souverainiste* PQ, and later the Bloc Québécois, have done that job very well for decades (with the petty-bourgeois QS now available to lend a hand as well). Fightback's particular twist is to call for "unity" with the chauvinist NDP, a party whose hostility to Quebec's national rights has made it a virtual non-factor among Québécois workers.

More fundamentally, what distinguishes us Trotskyists from frauds like Fightback is that ***we fight to build a revolutionary workers party, not a reformist one.*** If a social-democratic formation rooted in the working class did emerge in Quebec, Marxists would have to work out policies and tactics to win workers from its pro-capitalist, social-democratic politics and leadership, much as we do with the NDP in English Canada today. But our purpose is to build a Leninist vanguard party that fights for the overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment of a workers state: Fightback's is the bankrupt perspective of reforming the existing state through the election of a "socialist" government in the bourgeois parliament. That is the crux of our differences, and it informs our diametrically different approaches to the Quebec national question.

IMT Struggles Against "Separatism" and Slanders Lenin

In cozying up to the nationalist QS, Fightback/*La Riposte* wax on shamelessly about how they supposedly "fight against national oppression" and "defend all the democratic rights of the Québécois—including the right to self-determination, if the Québécois democratically decide on this question" ("Quebec: Whose sovereignty is it anyway?", marxist.com, 10 June). They add that "the movement for national liberation must be led by the working class" and fault "the bourgeois and petty bourgeois of Quebec" for being "incapable of completing the tasks of the democratic revolution." This pseudo-Marxist verbiage is written for the unwary. For one thing, far from being a semicolonial country of belated capitalist development (presumably in need of a "democratic revolution"), Quebec is part of the imperialist Canadian state, albeit nationally oppressed within it. More fundamentally, what Fightback is trying to do here is disguise its *opposition* to Quebec independence.

Boudjikanian/Chronicle

Public workers on strike in Kirkland, Quebec, June.

In English Canada, flag-waving jingoism is the habitual reflex of the NDP and labour tops, who deflect workers' justified anger at the capitalists' attacks on jobs and working conditions into chauvinist and protectionist campaigns against "foreigners." The forced retention of Quebec within Canada is part of the bedrock of such Canadian "national" consciousness.

Fightback itself pushes Canadian nationalism of the purest water. During the recent B.C. [British Columbia] provincial election, their leading Vancouver spokesman, Mike Palecek, chided the governing B.C. Liberals and the NDP tops for not being protectionist enough, while simultaneously embracing the rulers' anti-Communist campaign against China. Palecek complained that premier Gordon Campbell allows "lumber companies to shut down mills and send raw logs to China where they are milled in sweatshops, while thousands of workers are laid off here" and that the NDP platform "instead of *banning* raw log exports," "calls for *restricting* them" (marxist.ca, 8 May). This protectionist garbage is the logic of their embrace of pro-capitalist Canadian social democracy.

Fightback's opposition to Quebec independence allows them to swim in the stream of the Anglo-chauvinist NDP, but it is also scripture from much higher authority. In 2000, the IMT founder-leader, the late Ted Grant, and his successor Alan Woods jointly penned a lengthy thesis on "Marxism and the National Question" in which they revise Leninism on the national question and explicitly take up the mantle against "Quebec separatism." Bastardizing Lenin, they write: "The slogan of the right of self-determination, far from implying support for separation, was [for Lenin] ***on integral port of the struggle against seporation***"! In case any of their Quebec comrades might like to squirm away from this, Grant and Woods add immediately:

> "Let us take a modern example. The French-speaking population of Quebec feel nationally oppressed by Canada. The Quebecois nationalists are pressing for separation. A Marxist would say to the Quebecois: yes, you have the right to self-determination. We will defend that right. But we consider that separation will be to the detriment of the Quebecois and all the people of Canada. If there is a referendum we will certainly agitate and vote against separation. We stand for a socialist Quebec in a socialist Canada with full respect for national right [sic] as the only solution to our problems. This was approximately Lenin's position on the national question."
>
> —marxist.com, 25 February 2000

Of course there *was* a referendum on Quebec independence some five years before this statement. Notoriously, those who did "agitate" "against separation" were the entirety of the Anglo-chauvinist Canadian ruling class, backed by most of the Quebec bourgeoisie, and of course Fightback's beloved NDP. Calling for a No vote in 1995 was a straight capitulation to the Canadian capitalist class. (Fightback did not exist at the time; however a position for a No vote was taken by the grossly misnamed Bolshevik Tendency, who share Fightback's "concerns" for the "isolation" that would befall the Québécois workers should they be foolish enough to break from the Canadian state. See our polemic, "Bolshevik Tendency: Still in the Camp of Anglo Chauvinism," *SC* No. 120, Spring 1999.)

Moreover, Grant/Woods' claim that Lenin was for a "struggle against separation" is a slander and a lie. Basing himself on the lessons of the class struggle, Lenin addressed instances of national oppression *concretely*, seeking to further the fight for proletarian unity and socialist revolution. Defending the right to self-determination did not necessarily mean calling for independence, but it by no means excluded calls to exercise that right when circumstances warranted. In his seminal 1914 article "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination," Lenin cited the case of Norway's secession from Sweden:

> "The dissolution of the ties imposed upon Norway by the monarchs of Europe and the Swedish aristocracy strengthened the ties between the Norwegian and Swedish workers. The Swedish workers have proved that in spite of *all* the vicissitudes of bourgeois policy...they will be able to preserve and defend the complete equality and class solidarity of the workers of both nations in the struggle against both the Swedish and Norwegian bourgeoisie."

Later in the same article, Lenin pointed to Marx's support to Irish independence from Britain:

> "***...it is in the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland....*** The English working class will ***never accomplish anything*** until it has got rid of Ireland.... The English reaction in England had its roots...in the subjugation of Ireland."
>
> —Letter to Engels,
> 10 December 1869

This Marxist approach to the national question has direct applicability for proletarian revolutionists in Canada, where national animosities have long served to cripple working-class consciousness and struggle. Capitulating to Anglo chauvinism, hailing the petty-bourgeois QS, falsifying Lenin—the Fightback opportunists are certainly versatile. But there is one thing that they cannot do, and that is to provide revolutionary leadership to the working class. The Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste and the Spartacus Youth Clubs seek to expose such charlatans as part of our fight to forge a genuine Leninist vanguard party that will lead the struggle for North American socialist revolution. ■

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Iran in Turmoil

Imperialists Hands Off!
For a Leninist-Trotskyist Party in Iran to Fight for Workers Revolution!

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Saturday, October 3, 7 p.m.
OISE (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education)
252 Bloor Street West, Room 5150
(at St. George subway)

Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

U.S./Canadian Imperialism: Enemy of Workers' Rights Internationally

VANCOUVER
(604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Saturday, October 3, 2 p.m.
Roundhouse Community Centre, Board Room
181 Roundhouse Mews
(at Yaletown-Roundhouse Sky Train Station)

Spartacist Forums

U.S. Imperialism: Enemy of Women's Rights Internationally—For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

- Honor George Tiller! For Free Abortion on Demand!
- For Free, Quality Health Care!
- Break with the Democrats—Forge a Workers Party!

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Saturday, October 10, 3 p.m.
The Women's Building
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(near 16th St./Mission BART)
(510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO
Saturday, October 3, 5 p.m.
University of Chicago
Bartlett Hall, Bartlett Lounge
5640 S. University Ave.
(312) 563-0441
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES
Saturday, October 10, 2 p.m.
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
3300 Wilshire Blvd.
(2 blocks west of Vermont/Wilshire Red Line Station)
(213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY
Saturday, October 10, 3 p.m.
CWA Local 1180 Hall
6 Harrison Street, Manhattan
(1 train to Franklin, west on Franklin to Hudson, 1 block south to Harrison)
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WORKERS VANGUARD

Hundreds of Iraqi Gays Slaughtered Under Imperialist Occupation

AP photos

Left: U.S. troops patrol central Baghdad, February. Right: Murdered gays on streets of Iraq.

All U.S. Troops Out Now!

Across Iraq, gay men and boys are being murdered with impunity in a systematic campaign that started following the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and has been intensifying in the last few months. Death squads abduct their victims from the streets, break into their homes or entrap them in Internet gay chat rooms. They are brutalized and interrogated to extract the names of other potential victims before being murdered. The mutilated bodies are dumped in the garbage or hung as warnings in the street, their genitals cut off and the word "puppy," a derogatory term for homosexual, daubed on their chests. The murderers mete out grotesque and sadistic torture to their victims, sealing their anuses with glue and force-feeding them laxatives, leaving them to an agonizing death. Men are targeted for not looking "manly" enough, wearing their hair too long or their jeans too tight. Malicious neighborhood gossip could bring about a death sentence.

How many have been killed might never be known as many murders go unreported given the entrenched stigma and sense of shame associated with homosexuality. UN officials put the number in the hundreds; the London-based Iraqi group, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) reported that a total of 680 people have been murdered since 2004, seven of them women. According to the London *Observer* (13 September), more than 130 have been murdered since the beginning of the year.

The campaign has been largely blamed on Shi'ite militias. However, according to human rights groups, police and security forces and other religious and ethnic vigilante gangs are involved in the murders, from Shi'ites in the south to Sunnis in Baghdad to the Kurds in the north. Boys as young as 14 are shot and killed by the police for being gay.

It is the imperialist occupation that has unleashed the reactionary forces wreaking death and terror on gay men and fueled the ethnic and religious antagonisms engulfing Iraq in an orgy of bloodletting. By some estimates, more than 1.2 million people have been killed in Iraq since the U.S. invasion. And many of those carrying out such slaughter, including against homosexuals, are forces tied to the Iraqi government puppets put into power by the U.S.

It is a measure of the ferocity of the terror meted out to gay men today that they are nostalgic for the life they had under the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, the bloody oppressor of workers, leftists, Shi'ites and Kurds. As one gay man told *Newsweek* (26 August 2008), "Those were the most beautiful days of our lives," adding, "The fall [of Saddam] was the worst thing to happen." While suppressing all perceived political enemies, Saddam's regime did not criminalize homosexuality. Through suppression, he stayed the hands of the clerical reactionaries. In the lead-up to the 2003 invasion, we called for the military defense of Iraq against imperialist attack, without giving the capitalist regime of Saddam Hussein a scintilla of political support. *All U.S. troops out of Iraq now!*

While the crimes of abduction, torture

continued on page 10

No to Gun Control!

Freedom for Plaxico Burress!

On September 22, football star Plaxico Burress was sentenced to two years in prison. Last month, Burress had pleaded guilty to "attempted weapons possession," a lesser charge than the prosecution's original indictment on trumped-up gun possession and related charges that could have landed Burress in prison for 15 years. Confronted by a storm of ridicule in the bourgeois press and a district attorney who vowed to make an example of him, Burress felt compelled to cop a plea.

On the Saturday after Thanksgiving last year, Burress decided to go to some clubs in Manhattan with a couple of his New York Giants teammates. As Burress explained, he carried his gun with him that night because earlier that week teammate Steve Smith had been robbed at gunpoint in the same area where Burress was going. Later that evening, as he was climbing the stairs in the Latin Quarter nightclub, the gun fell from the waistband of his pants. He tried to stop it from falling to the floor; it accidentally discharged, wounding him slightly in the thigh.

This might have been only the stuff of tabloid journalism, had not New York's billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, intervened. Upon learning that Burress' gun, though legally purchased in Florida, was not registered in the state of New York, Bloomberg railed that anything short of the state minimum for unregistered gun possession, i.e., three and one-half years in jail, would be "a sham, a mockery of the law." When Bloomberg also demanded criminal charges be filed against New York-Presbyterian Hospital for not reporting Burress' wound to the cops, the hospital suspended Dr. Josyann Abisaab who treated Burress in the emergency room.

This is an outrageous assault on the constitutional right to bear arms. As Marxists, we stand for the right of armed self-defense and oppose gun control schemes which are nothing but ruling class attempts to disarm the population. The earliest 20th-century gun control laws were passed in states like South Carolina, Tennessee and Mississippi as a way to disarm blacks in the face of KKK terror. In 1965, the New York City Council passed a bill especially to keep black militant Malcolm X from carrying a carbine for protection.

The importance of this critical right was brought home to New Yorkers on August 13, when 72-year-old Harlem businessman Charles Augusto Jr. needed his shotgun to defend himself and two employees from four would-be robbers. Two of the intruders were wounded and two died from injuries in their attempted heist. Nearby residents were generally sympathetic to Augusto, who was described as a "good dude" who "helps out the neighborhood." A bystander at the shooting said, "I hope that the gun was licensed and that he was in his rights" (*New York Times* online, 13 August).

Hagen/NY Daily News

Plaxico Burress, a hero of Super Bowl XLII in February 2008, will now lose two years of his life for something that was not the least bit criminal. Like other prominent black and minority athletes, he is the target of efforts to disrupt or destroy his career for a "crime" without a victim. At the age of 32, this likely means the end of his football career and livelihood. Freedom for Plaxico Burress! ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

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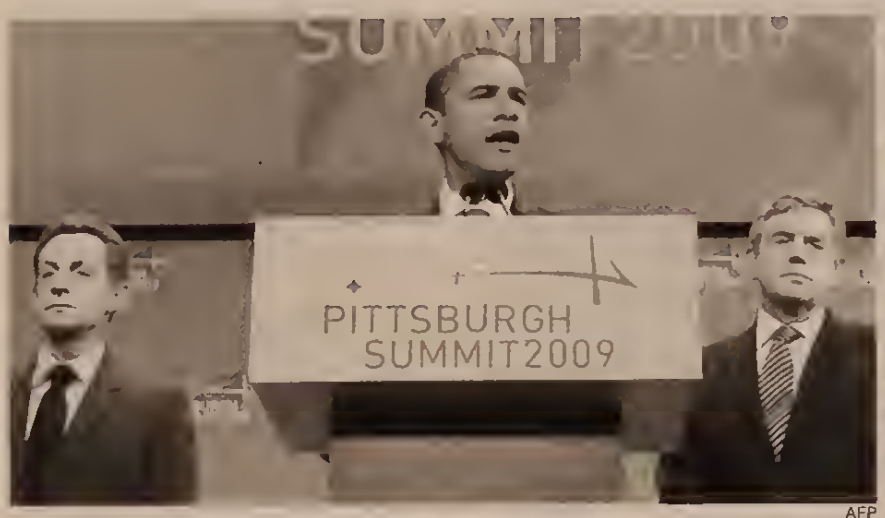
No. 944 | GCU C-701 | 9 October 2009

No to Imperialist Sanctions!

Down With U.S./Israeli Threats Against Iran!



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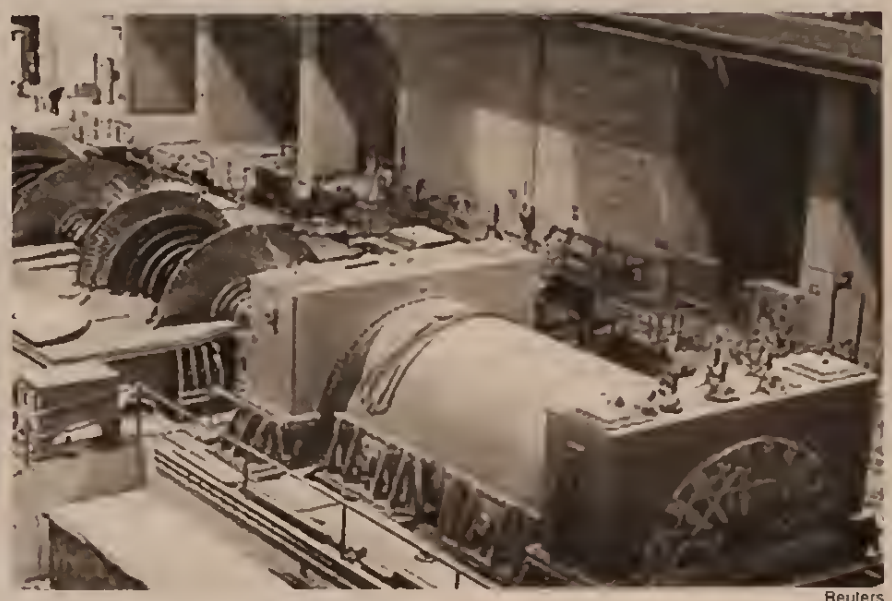

Reuters

Above: At Pittsburgh G20 Summit, Barack Obama, flanked by France's Nicolas Sarkozy and Britain's Gordon Brown, threatens Iran over its nuclear program. Right: Iran's Bushehr nuclear power station.

When Iran reported last month to the International Atomic Energy Agency that it was setting up a new nuclear enrichment facility, the Obama administration seized upon that otherwise routine announcement as the pretext for a fresh round of imperialist saber rattling. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton threatened "crippling" sanctions if Iran did not agree to rein in its nuclear program. President Barack Obama, speaking before the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, virtually parroted former president George Bush's 2002 "axis of evil" speech, railing that Iran and North Korea "must be held accountable." This is from the chief executive of the ruling class that brought humanity the atomic incineration of 200,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the slaughter of millions in counterrevolutionary wars in Korea and Vietnam in the 1950s and '60s, and countless CIA-sponsored coups and death squad regimes in Latin America and elsewhere—to cite just a few of the crimes of U.S. imperialism.

Meanwhile, the chief of staff of the Israeli military declared that "all options are on the table" with regard to Iran (haaretz.com, 21 September). That is the standard expression used by Israeli and U.S. officials—including by Obama during the presidential election campaign last year—to invoke the threat of a military attack against Iran. This summer, the British *Sunday Times* (5 July) reported that Saudi Arabia had secretly assured the head of the Mossad, Israel's CIA, that Riyadh would turn a blind eye if the Israeli air force flew through its airspace in order to attack nuclear installations in Iran. The same day that this article was published, an interview was aired with Vice President Joe Biden declaring that Israel has a "sovereign right" to carry out military strikes against Iran.

We are in no position to judge the likelihood of an impending U.S. or Israeli attack on Iran. The Iranian government says that it does not plan to develop the bomb, and has actually agreed to limited inspections. (Claims that Iraq was flouting such imperialist inspections were used by the U.S. as a pretext to invade that country.) In fact, given the threats by the imperialists, it is perfectly reasonable and necessary for Iran to pursue acquisition of nuclear weapons and adequate delivery systems to deter attack. In today's world, possession of nukes has increasingly become a necessary means of maintaining national sovereignty.

In the event of military attack against Iran by the U.S. or by Israel—the only nuclear-armed country in the Near East—operating on behalf of the U.S., it would be in the interest of the international proletariat to stand for the military defense of Iran, without giving an iota of political support to the reactionary Tehran regime. Likewise, in the lead-up to the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, we stood for the military defense of these countries while maintaining our intransigent political opposition to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats and the bloody capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Every victory for the imperialists encourages more predatory wars; every setback they suffer serves to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed the world over. We demand the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of U.S. and NATO troops and bases from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia!

Obama's Facelift for U.S. Imperialism

As we have repeatedly pointed out, after eight years of the oddly demented regime of George W. Bush, which reveled in imperialist arrogance and barbarity, Obama is well suited to help refurbish U.S. imperialism's tarnished image around the world. In that regard, Obama last month scuttled a fantastical (and costly) Bush plan to deploy (unworkable) missile interceptors in Poland—i.e., in Russia's "backyard"—ostensibly to shoot down (nonexistent) Iranian intercontinental ballistic missiles.

While outwardly talking up the need to engage Iran diplomatically, behind the scenes Obama has expanded Bush's efforts to stifle the Iranian economy, now seeking to cut off the supply of fuel on which the country depends. In this, Obama is simply carrying out his presidential campaign promise of "putting the squeeze on them." (Iran, for lack of refinery capacity, relies on gasoline imports for as much as 40 percent of its consumption.)

Iran is subject to three sets of UN sanctions as well as a growing number of U.S. sanctions. As revolutionary Marxists, we oppose any U.S., UN or European economic sanctions against Iran, which are an act of war. Whether the Commander-in-Chief is a Democrat or Republican, wars of conquest and occupation are an integral feature of imperialism, from the Philippines at the dawn of the 20th century to Iraq and Afghanistan today. As Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), the pronounced importance of the export of capital is a characteristic of imperialism. The productive forces of capitalism long ago outgrew the confines of the nation-state, with the imperialist powers, each representing its own national interests, engaging in ruthless struggle against each other and their neocolonial victims to redivide markets and spheres of influence, leading to war.

Washington has been largely successful in getting international banks and oil companies to stop financing or working on oil and gas contracts in Iran. This has put in question dozens of Iranian development projects. As *Time* (30 September) reported:

> "Rather than passing laws or attempting to push new sanctions through the U.N. Security Council—where Russia and China could veto them—officials are quietly approaching companies directly, convincing executives that the cost of doing business with Iran has become too high.... 'The message seems to be getting across.'"

Indeed, one reason Tehran views nuclear power as an important potential source of energy is the debilitating impact of sanctions on its oil and gas fields, which have been starved of the technologies necessary for their upkeep and improvement.

A bill that has overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress would formalize Obama's policy by legally banning any company involved in the sale of gasoline to Iran from doing business in the U.S. The bill's chief author, Democratic Congressman Howard Berman, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said that if the bill achieved its purpose, "the Iranian banking system would collapse" and Iran's "economy would be seriously impaired" (*Washington Post*, 26 September). That scenario would have a devastating impact on Iran's entire population, especially working people and the poor.

After British Petroleum and India-based Reliance halted exports of refined petroleum products to Iran, Chinese state-owned companies stepped in to fill the gap and now supply about one-third of Iran's gasoline imports. China has been rapidly deepening its economic links with Iran, as it has with other oil-producing countries outside the Near East—for example, in Africa and Venezuela—where Washington has an overwhelmingly dominant strategic position. China has been Iran's biggest oil export market for the past five years, and Beijing has committed some $120 billion to Iranian oil and gas projects. As two former National Security Council staff members noted in the *New York Times* (29 September): "Chinese military officials are particularly focused on the potential for Iranian hydrocarbons to come to China through

continued on page 10

TROTSKY

FROM THE ARCHIVES OF MARXISM

LENIN

Martin Widelin: Martyred Trotskyist Leader in World War II German Underground

World War II was the second round of the bloody conflict among gangs of imperialist powers. It was driven by the same underlying economic impulse as the First World War: the struggle among the imperialist powers to seize new arenas of exploitation around the planet and to defend their existing ones. However, unlike during World War I, in 1939, the year World War II began, the Soviet Union existed. The USSR, despite Stalinist degeneration, continued to embody the gains ushered in by the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, such as collectivized property and a planned economy. It represented a conquest for the world proletariat that had to be defended. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky wrote in "War and the Fourth International" (1934): "*Defense of the Soviet Union* from the blows of the capitalist enemies, irrespective of the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict, is the elementary and imperative duty of every honest labor organization."

Among the young militants who rallied to Trotsky's banner of proletarian internationalism was Martin Monat (Widelin). Born in Berlin in 1913, he was an activist since the age of 15. Hounded by the Gestapo after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, Widelin was compelled to leave Germany in 1938. He went to Belgium, where he came into contact with the Fourth International and was won over to Trotskyism from Hashomer Hatzair, a socialist-Zionist youth organization. In 1941, he issued a manifesto in German against Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. He also founded the illegal German Trotskyist paper, *Arbeiter und Soldat* (Worker and Soldier).

Widelin carried out courageous underground work during the war, traveling between Belgium and France and establishing a special group of militants for work among soldiers, crucially including German soldiers. The Stalinists denounced all German soldiers as Nazis, all the while falsely claiming, along with the "democratic" imperialists, that World War II was for "democracy against fascism." In contrast, the Trotskyists sought fraternization with German soldiers—overwhelmingly conscripts, many of whom hailed from Communist or Social Democratic backgrounds—with the aim of winning them to the revolutionary program of turning the imperialist war into a civil war against the imperialist mass murderers.

Widelin, along with another comrade, Marguerite Baget, was arrested in July 1944 by the French Anti-Communist Police Bureau (SPAC). After being tortured, Widelin was then handed over by the SPAC to the German Gestapo, which murdered him on July 22. As Marguerite Baget acidly noted in an article reprinted in the 20 July 1946 issue of the *Militant*, newspaper of the then-revolutionary Socialist Workers Party in the U.S.: "What a symbol—the *German* Widelin tortured and killed by the *French-German* Gestapo." We reprint below a tribute to Widelin and his work by Trotskyist leader George Breitman, published in the same issue of the *Militant*.

* * *

Martin Widelin—member of the European Executive Committee of the Fourth International, assassinated by the French-German Gestapo in Paris two years ago on July 22—was one of the great figures of the revolutionary movement of our time.

A German himself, he was a lifelong foe of German capitalist reaction and fascism. He fought against the Nazis before they came to power and then afterward, both inside Germany and in the countries occupied by them. He was a living refutation of the foul slander that the German working class was responsible for Hitlerism. As such, he inspired both Belgian and French workers and German soldiers to struggle against Hitlerite oppression.

Martin Widelin--Our Martyr

A Heroic Trotskyist Leader In The German Underground

By Marguerite Baget

Why The Gestapo Tracked Him Down

By George Breitman

MARTIN WIDELIN

THE MILITANT

20 July 1946

ARBEITER und SOLDAT

NIEDER MIT DEM KRIEG
SOFORTIGER FRIEDEN !

July 1944

Above: SWP's *Militant* pays tribute to Trotskyist martyr Martin Widelin. Left: Underground Trotskyist paper *Arbeiter und Soldat* (Worker and Soldier), founded by Widelin, appealed to German troops in occupied France on basis of proletarian internationalism.

Opposition to Nazism was not unusual in Europe. But the anti-fascism of Widelin and his comrades was something unique. For their opposition was conducted throughout in the spirit of *internationalism*.

They did not unite with the agents of Allied capitalism around the nationalist slogan of "Death to the Boche!"—as the Stalinists and "Socialists" did. On the contrary, Widelin and his co-workers in all countries sought to unite the masses of the occupied countries with the German soldiers in the occupying armies in a joint struggle against their common oppressors. *Fraternization* was their method, for they knew that only through fraternization could the struggle against Hitlerism have a successful revolutionary outcome. As a consequence, the Gestapo placed a higher price on the head of Widelin than it did on many an Allied general.

Widelin's work was exceedingly dangerous. It was far easier to stick a knife between the ribs of a German soldier on a dark night than to meet that same German in the daytime, win his confidence and enlist him in the ranks of the revolutionary fighters against fascism. But difficult though this work was, Widelin carried it out with growing success until the day of his death.

In close cooperation with French and Belgian Trotskyists, he helped to establish a network of Fourth Internationalist cells within the Wehrmacht. This work was so effective that the Gestapo dispatched a special commission to Paris to destroy the Trotskyists. In one German unit alone, more than 30 soldiers were executed as Trotskyists after a stoolpigeon had been introduced into their midst.

Widelin's greatest achievement was *Arbeiter und Soldat* (Worker and Soldier), illegal German paper which he founded and edited under the direction of the European Secretariat of the Fourth International.

To be caught with a copy of this paper meant horrible torture and certain death. Yet it circulated from France where it was printed in the underground all the way back through Belgium into Germany itself. And—as the British Trotskyist paper, *Socialist Appeal*, reported recently—copies made their way to the distant German garrisons in Italy. (Despite many raids, the Gestapo never discovered the press on which *Arbeiter und Soldat* was printed.)

Among Widelin's other contributions was the role he played in helping to prepare the historic European Conference of the Fourth International in February, 1944, to which he was a delegate and by which he was elected as a member of the European Executive Committee.

Widelin's murder was a great blow to the Fourth International and above all to its German section. If he were ALIVE today, we know that he would again be inside Germany, fighting to end the Allied oppression of that country. But not in any nationalist spirit! He would be passionately organizing the German workers for independent struggle, he would be actively working among the Allied soldiers trying to win their sympathy and support. His method would still be fraternization. His slogan and goal would still be the one for which he gave his life—the Socialist United States of Europe and the whole world. ■

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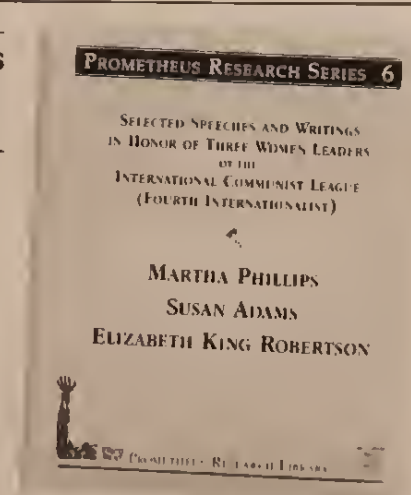

The Economic Crisis and the Transitional Program

Johannesburg, South Africa
6 September 2009

Dear comrades,

Having just read the article "The California Budget Crisis and the Bankruptcy of American Capitalism" in *WV* No. 941 (28 August), I have a criticism of the programmatic answer we offer for the current economic crisis. The article gives a compelling picture of the massive attacks being meted out by the dual capitalist parties that run the state government. However, the presentation of transitional demands is deficient in that the article never makes the point that a revolutionary workers government, expropriating the capitalist class as a whole, would proceed to build a planned economy. The workers government is defined—twice—as one in which "those who labor rule," and expropriation is raised in the last paragraph. But the fundamental economic task of a workers state—the development of a socialized, planned economy based on a perspective of international proletarian revolution, i.e., a world socialist order—is not. Thus, the article raises the demand for public works but does not provide the link made in Leon Trotsky's Transitional Program between such programs and the need for comprehensive economic planning.

This could leave readers with a narrow understanding of the task of a workers government and of socialism as a program to seize the existing wealth of the capitalists and use it to provide quality health care, housing, etc. In both South Africa and the U.S., this would certainly be a start in reconstructing society in the interests of the masses. But it is not the fundamental answer to the periodic wrenching economic crises wrought by the anarchic system of capitalist production or to overcoming scarcity.

In this period of ideological reaction, we have the task of defending the most basic tenets of revolutionary Marxism—not least, the need for a planned economy—against bourgeois spokesmen and their tails on the reformist left, which has increasingly renounced any allegiance to the October Revolution and any defense of the workers state it created, as well as the remaining deformed workers states of China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba. As a case in point, today's Johannesburg *Sunday Times* reported that Trevor Manuel, formerly Finance minister and now Planning minister for the Tripartite Alliance government under Jacob Zuma, has released a policy paper that "warned against a communist-style of planning, saying centralisation of decision-making could cripple the state" and cited "China's communist Great Leap Forward policy and the Soviet Union's planned economy as examples of planning 'gone terribly wrong'." This comes from a spokesman for a government that includes the South African Communist Party, which we should not expect to make any defense of socialist planning.

I don't think that the California article was the place to get into how Stalinist bureaucratic rule gave central planning a bad name (to put it mildly). But I do think that in any substantial article dealing with the current economic crisis we should speak to the need for a planned economy. This is not only a fundamental, necessary component of our program, but it has potential popular appeal given the attacks on the working class, blacks, immigrants and the poor coming down thanks to an economic system based on the drive for private profit and not social need.

Comradely,
B.

* * *

7 September 2009

To the Editor:

> "In the United States, where a man who owns a million is referred to as being 'worth' a million, market concepts have sunk in deeper than anywhere else."—"Marxism in Our Time"
>
> "In any event, whoever has not overcome the habit of uncritically accepting the ready-made ideological reflections of economic development, whoever has not reasoned out, in the footsteps of Marx, the essential nature of the commodity as the basic cell of the capitalist organism, will prove to be forever incapable of scientifically comprehending the most important and the most acute manifestations of our epoch."—"Marxism in Our Time"

The reason I write is to comment on a sentence in the very fine lead article in *WV* No. 941 [28 August]. Near the end of that article one finds this: "While the capitalist rulers hray that Marxism has proved to he a 'failed experiment,' they cannot eliminate the class struggle, which is horn of the irreconcilahle conflict of interests between labor and capital." This is undouhtedly correct—as far as it goes. But the question still remains—either socialism or barbarism. And what of Marxism? From the anarchist "left" through the entire political spectrum to the extreme right, if there is one point upon which all these "fine ladies and gentlemen" agree, it is that genuine Marxism (a.k.a. Trotskyism) and a workers' government (the dictatorship of the proletariat) are historically irrelevant as *the* solution and resolution to the class struggle of labor against capital. And they have been quite vocal and strident about this, especially since the destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers' state.

Furthermore, the Bolshevik-Leninist party—the essential instrument and only means of successfully destroying capitalism and its State through leading the workers' (socialist) revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the gateway to constructing the socialist order—is likewise poo-pooed by these oh-so "learned" anti-Marxists of all stripes.

Nothing could be further from the truth than the shrill babblings of these assorted anti-Marxists. The current crisis of American (and world) capitalism proves beyond any doubt that Marx was and continues to he right. We understand this, hut the most advanced workers and youth, as yet, do not. Therefore, Marx's ideas must be patiently explained over and over and over again.

As a friendly suggestion, I would like to put forward the following point:

I think that it might prove useful, if only through the device of a running commentary (incorporating updated statistics and trends), to present a more contemporary version of "Marxism in Our Time" by Trotsky (1939). Trotsky did something similar in his 1937 work "Ninety Years of the *Communist Manifesto*." If one declares that Karl Marx was right (and he most certainly was and is), then one should make clear to the most advanced workers and youth, point for point, exactly how and where, in a systematic presentation. As J.S. noted in his excellent article on the united front ["The United Front Taetic: Its Use and Abuse"] (*WV* No. 941), the "...perspective should be to produce more and better propaganda...explaining many complex ideas to the few." There are more than a few in the SL/US and the ICL(FI) who are capable of producing such a work.

Additionally, I have found it useful to re-read Trotsky's 1932 Copenhagen speech "In Defense of October" and his work "Stalinism and Bolshevism" (1937).

Best fraternal wishes,
Mike W.

Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs with Leon Trotsky in Mexico. *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, known as the Transitional Program, is a basic programmatic document of the Trotskyist movement.

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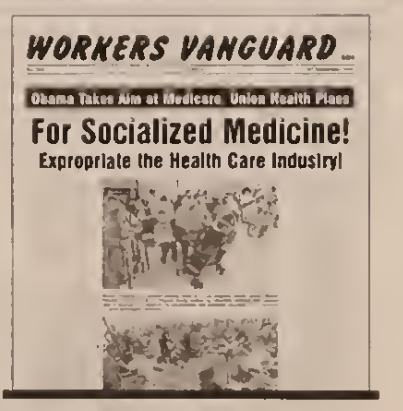

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SLAVERY AND THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

We print below, in slightly edited form, the third and final part of a presentation by Jacob Zorn to a Spartacist League educational in New York on 30 March 2008. The first two parts were published in WV Nos. 942 and 943 (11 September and 25 September).

PART THREE

One way of contrasting the American Revolution to the French Revolution is to look at the case of Tom Paine. In the American Revolution, he was the far-left wing. But when he went to France, while he supported the French Revolution, he ended up essentially on the right wing of the revolution. It wasn't his ideas that changed so much as the context. And when the Haitian Revolution erupted in 1791, even the elements of the American Revolution that supported the French Revolution, such as Jefferson, hated the Haitian Revolution and wanted to drown it in blood, because they saw in it a spectre that would threaten slavery in the South. Interestingly, Hamilton was one of the more open to recognizing Haiti as an independent country, partly because he hated France. Also, it's interesting that the leaders of the American Revolution who were the most anti-slavery—Alexander Hamilton and Tom Paine—were not really American in the traditional sense. Tom Paine had just come over from Britain, and Hamilton was from the West Indies.

I do not want to suggest that the American Revolution was nothing more than a pro-slavery rebellion. As the article on Haiti points out, "To be sure, some radical elements in the American Revolution, including Thomas Paine, denounced slavery as a moral evil and called for its abolition. And Jefferson himself was well aware—and was constantly reminded by his liberal and radical English and French friends—that black chattel slavery was blatantly incompatible with the democratic principles he so eloquently proclaimed" (*WV* No. 764, 14 September 2001).

The common way liberals and idealists deal with this problem, especially with Jefferson, is to say that the *ideals* of Jefferson transcended the *reality* of Jefferson (and other founders)—that this was their own personal weakness. But in reality, whatever his personal weaknesses, Jefferson's beliefs reflected the interests of his class, which was the slavocracy, and it was *social struggle* that expanded bourgeois-democratic rights to black people, including through the Civil War, and not a closer reading of the Declaration of Independence.

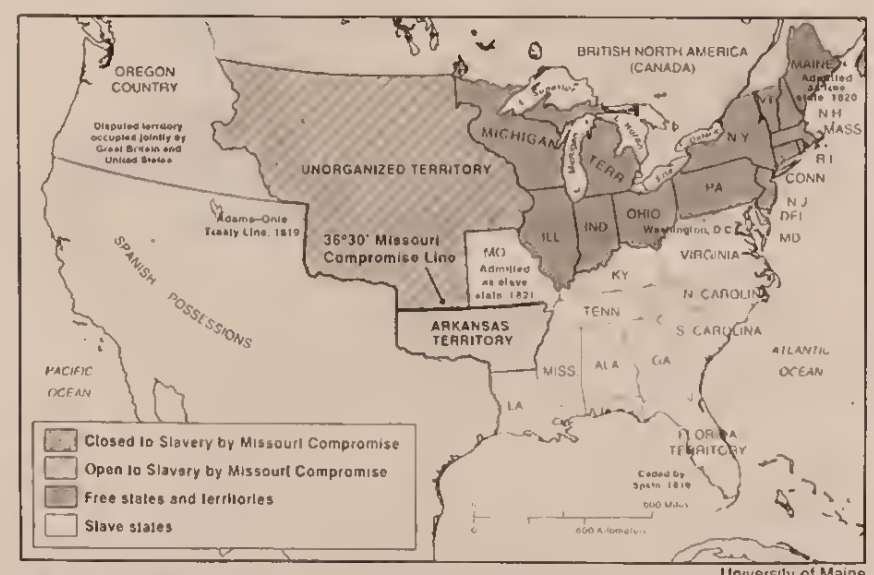
Incidentally, abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison rejected the entire Constitution—they called it a "covenant with death"—because it was pro-slavery, but in some ways they drew the wrong conclusion. That is to say, they avoided political struggle in favor of "moral suasion." But their analysis of the Constitution as pro-slavery was correct. When Frederick Douglass broke with Garrison, he also changed his views of the Constitution.

Madison County Historical Society

Top: Frederick Douglass, third from left, at abolitionist meeting in New York State around 1850. Above: William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*.

The Early U.S. and Slavery

To many, the pro-slavery nature of the Constitution at the time may have appeared justified because many people thought that slavery would die a slow but natural death: the international slave trade was going to be abolished, the fertility of the soil in tobacco country was declining, and tobacco prices were in decline. But two things gave the Southern slavocracy a renewed lease on life, and Jefferson was at least indirectly involved in both. One was the invention of the cotton gin in the 1790s that made slave-produced cotton profitable. Jefferson as secretary of state approved the patent by Eli Whitney, and he also bought one of the earliest models. The second was the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, in which Jefferson as president basically illegally doubled the size of the United States. There is a whole debate in the history books over whether Napoleon or Jefferson was the one most responsible for the Louisiana Purchase. But in reality I think it was Toussaint L'Ouverture—by having defeated the French in Haiti, he made it so that Napoleon wanted to wash his hands of any colonies in America as quickly as possible.



University of Maine

Missouri Compromise of 1820 admitted Missouri as a slave state. As Marx noted: "Each of these compromises denotes a new encroachment of the South, a new concession of the North."

Taken together, these developments increased the power of the Southern slavocracy and propelled them into conflict with the North. As we all know, this conflict between the capitalist North and the slave South eventually led to the Civil War, the second bourgeois revolution in the United States. However, the Northern capitalists were not engaged in one unceasing revolutionary struggle. Key elements of the Northern bourgeoisie were all too eager to cohabit with slavery because it was profitable. However, by the mid 19th century, the development of capitalism as a whole increasingly came into conflict with the domination of the Southern system in national politics. Marx in 1861 sarcastically described what he called the Northern bourgeoisie's "long hesitations, and an exhibition of forbearance unknown in the annals of European history," in describing their willingness to compromise with the South.

And in fact, Marx was one of the greatest observers of the class dynamics of American politics. Here's a rather long quote from the same article by Marx:

> "The progressive abuse of the Union by the slave power, working through its alliance with the Northern Democratic party, is, so to say, the general formula of the United States history since the beginning of this century. The successive compromise measures mark the successive degrees of the encroachment by which the Union became more and more transformed into the slave of the slave-owner. Each of these compromises denotes a new encroachment of the South, a new concession of the North. At the same time none of the successive victories of the South was carried but after a hot contest with an antagonistic force in the North, appearing under different party names with different watchwords and under different colors. If the positive and final result of each single contest told in favor of the South, the attentive observer of history could not but see that every new advance of the slave power was a step forward to its ultimate defeat. Even at the times of the Missouri Compromise the contending forces were so evenly balanced that Jefferson, as we see from his memoirs, apprehended the Union to be in danger of splitting on that deadly antagonism. The encroachments of the slaveholding power reached their maximum point, when, by the Kansas-Nebraska bill, for the first time in the history of the United States, as Mr. [Stephen] Douglas himself confessed, every legal barrier to the diffusion of Slavery within the United States territories was broken down, when, afterward, a Northern candidate bought his Presidential nomination by pledging the Union to conquer or purchase in Cuba a new field of dominion for the slaveholder; when, later on, by the Dred Scott decision, diffusion of Slavery by the Federal power was proclaimed as the law of the American Constitution, and lastly, when the African slave-trade was de facto reopened on a larger scale than during the times of its legal existence. But, concurrently with this climax of Southern encroachments, carried by the connivance of the Northern Democratic party, there were unmistakable signs of Northern antagonistic agencies having gathered such strength as must soon turn the balance of power."
>
> —"The American Question in England" (1861)

So the point is that there was what New York Senator William Henry Seward called an "irrepressible conflict" between slavery and freedom. I'm going to give somewhat short shrift to the 1850s, not because it's an unimportant period, but because it's so important that comrades are probably more familiar with it than with the earlier stuff. I also think that the first volume of James McPherson's *Ordeal by Fire* (1982) covers this ground very well. But I want to draw comrades' attention to several factors. One is the role of the political parties, and the second is the role of expansion.

As Marx illustrates, the Democratic Party—including in the North—was a pro-slavery party. The contemporary political system that we have today is relatively new. For much of the antebellum period, there were two parties, the Whigs and the Democrats. The Democratic Party, formed by Jefferson in 1792 and reformed by President Andrew Jackson in the 1830s, was a populist party. They were in favor of what is often called "Jacksonian Democracy," which goes down in various history books as the expansion of democracy in the United States. They were for the rule of the "little man"; they were against banks and entrenched economic power. They opposed the creation of a national bank. They were a white man's party, viciously anti-Indian—Jackson carried out one of the brutal series of attacks that pushed the Indians out of

the Southeast and further west—and also viciously pro-slavery and anti-black. This was also the time of increasing Irish immigration, and the Democratic Party, especially in big Northern cities like here in New York, based themselves on immigration.

In the South, the Democrats were an openly pro-slavery party. Although he had his differences with Jackson, one key Democratic leader was John C. Calhoun, who was in many ways the intellectual grandfather of the Confederacy. He developed the idea—"nullification"—that a state could refuse to abide by the federal government if it disagreed. He also believed, unlike Jefferson, that slavery was not only necessary, but was positively good. And this is really the history of the Democratic Party. There is a new book that is very interesting, by Bruce Bartlett, who writes for the *Wall Street Journal*, called *Wrong on Race: The Democratic Party's Buried Past* (2008). He is pro-Republican and so has an ax to grind, but it goes through the history of the Democratic Party on the question of slavery and then later on Reconstruction, up through the Dixiecrats.

The other political party was called the Whigs. They opposed what they saw as increased presidential power. They wanted the government to intervene into the economy to help spur capitalist development, such as through a national bank, protective tariffs to develop industry, and government spending on what were called "internal improvements," or infrastructure. Both these parties had supporters in the North and the South, but as slavery became a more important issue, they were increasingly torn apart.

Bettmann

John Brown, courageous fighter against slavery.

The other party that developed, as the slave question basically corroded the Whigs in the 1850s, was the Republican Party. The Republicans were not an abolitionist party, but they were perhaps the most radical mainstream party that the country has ever seen. They were dedicated not to eliminating slavery, but to rolling back the power of the slave South—the so-called Slave Power. There is a good book by Eric Foner that sums up the goal of the early Republicans, called *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (1970). The Republican Party became the party of the American bourgeoisie in its struggle against the slavocracy—it was a class-based party, something that we are told doesn't exist in the United States.

And then there were the abolitionists, who were seen as a radical fringe, but who played a very important role in pushing the question of slavery forward. I said that there is really no radical Cromwell or Robespierre figure in the American Revolution, but it's the abolitionists who are the real radical bourgeois revolutionaries in the history of the United States. It is to them that we look, not Thomas Jefferson.

Why did the two systems keep butting heads? It was not about the morality of slavery or about broader philosophical issues. It was because both slavery and capitalism had built-in tendencies to expand, and the expansion of one came at the expense of the other. So, as Marx wrote, one had to vanquish the other. There are three reasons why the Southern slavocracy needed to expand:

1. Exhausted soil. Just as in Roman times, the slavery system used up the soil rapidly. The emphasis was on getting the most crops possible now, and not on preserving the soil. In the North, they were able to invest capital in order to fertilize farm land, but in the South they didn't do that. So there was an endless need for more land. According to Eugene Genovese's *The Political Economy of Slavery* (1967), by 1858 some 40 percent of the South's cotton land was already exhausted.

2. Political. The three-fifths compromise was designed to give the South more power than its population warranted, but it still could not allow the North to obtain more free states. Every free state needed to be offset by a slave state, to prevent the North from getting the upper hand.

Schomburg Library

Toussaint L'Ouverture, leader of Haitian Revolution. Establishment of black republic in Caribbean inspired slave revolts in American South.

3. Domestic slave trade. Less important, but still real, was that the slaveholders in the older states, like Virginia and Maryland, raised money by selling slaves to the Lower South, so they had an interest in keeping slavery expanding.

So the whole politics of the South was one of expanding slavery, and they saw any interference with the growth and expansion of slavery as a dagger aimed at the heart of the entire slave system.

But the free North also needed to expand. The key reason was, as we all know, that capitalism has to have expanding markets as its productivity increases. Capitalism depends on growing markets, and although a fair number of capitalists made a profit on selling to the South, slaves were not very big consumers, and there was a limit to the planters' demand for goods. So from the point of view of the North, the South was really a stagnant economy, compared to the West, which the Northeastern and Northern capitalists saw as a vast potential market. They were increasingly selling to the West, but this depended on the expansion of free labor and not slavery to the West.

The second reason was political. The North did not want to be dominated by the South more than it already was, so it needed to offset the growth of slave states. Both the North and the South had agreed in theory that expansion was good. This was the period of so-called "Manifest Destiny"—the idea that God had uniquely blessed the United States with the job of civilizing the American continent. This idea was popular in the North and in the South, but the devil was in the details, and the question was what to do about the land that became part of the United States.

The first real crisis came with the Missouri Compromise of 1820. Missouri was the second state admitted from the Louisiana Purchase, and essentially what was agreed on in 1820 was the temporary measure of drawing a line, anything north of which would become free, and anything south of which would become slave. But the problem was broached again every several years.

A key thing, to which I'm going to give a lot less attention than it deserves, was Texas. In the 1830s, slaveholders had moved to Texas, and they basically engineered a split from Mexico. The South supported this because they wanted Texas to join the country as a slave state. The so-called Texas Revolution of 1835-36 was basically a rebellion against Mexico in order to protect slavery. The North did not want Texas to join as a slave state or, God forbid, several slave states.

So, a lot of the roots of the immediate struggle over slavery in the 1840s and '50s go back to how to deal with the question of Texas. Mexico, for obvious reasons, did not want its former territory to be annexed by the United States, and when in 1845 the Southern states essentially were able to annex Texas, that act provoked a war with Mexico. And so, in 1846 the United States invaded Mexico and ended up occupying Mexico City and important cities like Veracruz and Monterrey. As a result of the 1846-48 war, the U.S. took over half of Mexico's territory, and the acquisition of these new territories gave rise to disputes between the North and South that helped lead to the Civil War (see "Mexican-American War: Prelude to American Civil War," *WV* Nos. 933 and 934, 27 March and 10 April).

continued on page 6

Franz Mehring

On Race as a Social Construct

Race is not a scientifically valid concept; it developed as a justification for exploitation and slavery. As early as 1893, the German Marxist leader Franz Mehring pointed to the fact that race is a social-historical concept in his work On Historical Materialism, *which we excerpt below.*

Historical materialism sees historical development in the gradual progression from the domination of man by nature to the domination of nature by man.

This progress is one and the same as the progress of countless tribes of men, who developed out of the animal world to the one social community, which some day will encompass the whole of the human race. The course of history is not the "differentiation of the homogenous, but the assimilation of the heterogeneous." That differentiation was the legendary conception, as it is found in the Biblical genealogical construction of Ham, Shem and Japhet, in Tacitus' German genealogy of the three brothers Ingaev, Istaev and Hermin, or the Slav Czech, Lech and Russ. This assimilation, however, is a scientific conception derived as much from what daily takes place before our eyes, as it is from the investigations into the history of primitive man.

It is one of the insoluble contradictions in which mechanical materialism moves in the field of history, that it totally denies in the struggle for existence in human society the principle of evolution with which, in the realm of nature, it explains the peculiarities of a given species as the adaptation to their environment in the light for existence, and claims that the human race here has certain permanent features which it has never had and never will have. In tortured additions to this indefensible conception, in the effort to make it compatible with clearly contradictory facts, the concept of race has become so indeterminate.... In fact already in the prehistorical primitive times, the crossing and mixture of different races and tribes had begun, and the first civilizations of antiquity are proved by the Russian researcher Mechnikov to have been the result of a very colourful mixture of different races and tribes, of combinations in which the relative importance of the different combinations had never been remotely understood. Thus for example, it is difficult to weigh which of the three races, the black, the white or the yellow did the most for the civilization of ancient Egypt. The history of Chaldaea even shows that the black race, the so-called Kushites, were more advanced than any of the others in civilization. It advances us even less to take language instead of blood or colour as the sign of differentiation between races. In each of the main language groups, the Aryan, Semitic and Mongolian, there are people of the most varied origins, and if Herr Barth does have some reservations about the utterances of some "brilliant" statesman or other, to the effect that "race is everything" and yet claims that race is important, and tries to support this claim by insisting that the Aryan race is superior to the Semitic in its "political abilities," then we must say in this connection not only that race is unimportant, but that it counts for absolutely nothing. And it is a little strange that Herr Barth refers to the words of some unnamed English statesman, while he will of course have read in the works of the world famous English philosopher, John Stuart Mill, about the assumption of racial differences: "Of all vulgar modes of escaping from the consideration of the effect of social and moral influences on the human mind the most vulgar is that of attributing the diversities of conduct and character to inherent natural differences" (*Principles of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, p. 390).

Historical materialism does not neglect race in any way: it is the first to make it a clear concept. There is no more an unchanging race of human beings than there is an unchanging race of animals, except that animals are subject to the laws of development of nature, and the human race is subject to the laws of development of society. The more human beings become independent of nature, the more the natural races mix and merge together; the more man's control over nature grows, the more completely the natural races become transformed into social classes. And as far as the capitalist mode of production extends, the differences between the races have been dissolved or are dissolving more each day into the class opposites. Within human society race is not a natural but a historic concept, which in the last analysis is determined by the material form of production, and is subordinate to the laws of its development, as Kautsky proved in the most convincing way in relation to concepts of nationality.

Cops Rampage at G20 Protests

Thousands of police and National Guard members were mobilized against protesters outside the September 24-25 G20 summit, turning Pittsburgh into an armed camp for the better part of a week. Some 200 people were arrested and the reprisals continue. Elliot Madison faces charges for tweeting demonstrators instructions on how to avoid police.

Young Spartacus

On October 1, FBI "anti-terrorism" agents spent 16 hours raiding his Queens, New York home. While helicopters circled overhead, they seized anarchist literature and other items in an attempt to frame him up as a terrorist. *Drop the charges against Elliot Madison and all the G20 protesters now!*

When our *Workers Vanguard* sales team arrived in Pittsburgh on Thursday, September 24, gangs of heavily armed and armored cops and troops roamed the center of the city. Protesters organized by the Pittsburgh G-20 Resistance Project tried to march without a permit and were brutally attacked by cops. Over a hundred students and bystanders, including members of the press, were arrested at that protest and a similar one on Friday.

The Pittsburgh G-20 Resistance Project vainly sought to pressure the capitalist state to serve the interests of the people, not corporations. Although their tactics were more militant, fundamentally they shared the same liberal framework as the organizers of Friday's permitted "Peoples' March to the G-20." That event, also menaced by phalanxes of cops, was organized as a plea to the imperialists at the G20 summit for "Money for human needs, not for wars and occupations—Environmental justice for the earth and its inhabitant—Jobs and health care for all." Falling in step behind the imperialists' anti-China crusade, organizers invited a large contingent of anti-communists carrying flags of the U.S. and of the CIA-backed Tibetan exiles to march at the front.

AP

Pittsburgh, September 24.

Drop All Charges Against Pittsburgh Protesters!

We were there not to pressure the capitalist state but to seek out those protesters open to our revolutionary communist program based on the social power of the working class. Against the sabre rattling against Iran's nuclear facilities by Obama and the French and British imperialists, we raised a placard: "Iran Needs Nuclear Weapons to Defend Itself—Imperialist Hands Off Iran!" Below we reprint a protest letter to Pittsburgh mayor Luke Ravenstahl that we distributed in Pittsburgh, issued on September 24 by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.

* * *

The Partisan Defense Committee condemns the brutal repression against anti-G20 demonstrators. We demand the immediate release and the dropping of all charges against the protesters.

Local armored police backed up by 4,000 federal and state agents have fired pepper gas canisters, pellet-filled beanbags and rubber bullets at assembled demonstrators. Protesters attempting to exercise their First Amendment rights to demonstrate were told, "You must leave the immediate vicinity regardless of your purpose." Dozens have been arrested on trumped-up charges. So grotesque has been this assault on civil liberties that demonstrators hanging a banner on a bridge that merely read "Danger—climate destruction ahead. Reduce CO2 emissions now," now face outrageous charges of "defiant trespass, disorderly conduct, obstruction of highways or other public passages, conspiracy and possession of instruments of crime."

For those seeking to protest the ravages of poverty made worse by the world economic crisis, you have made your city into a police state. We again demand the release of all leftist protesters and the dropping of all charges against them. ■

Slavery...

(continued from page 5)

The situation created compromise after compromise. Many Northerners preferred to compromise with the South, and so there were a series of compromises, but the crisis over Texas and the invasion of Mexico basically made continued compromises impossible. Northerners, including Democrats, had been less willing to support the invasion of Mexico because it was seen as a war to expand slavery. Not just the abolitionists—although the abolitionists were the most fervent—but many people in the North were against the invasion of Mexico because they thought it was a pro-slavery conspiracy, which to a large degree it was.

The U.S obviously won the war against Mexico, which had important effects on the development of both U.S. and Mexican capitalism. Yet the immediate result of the victory was to bring the United States even closer to civil war. The first sign of this was the Wilmot Proviso, in which Northern states refused to finance the war against Mexico so long as it was seen as increasing the number of slave states. The Wilmot Proviso declared that the war would only be funded if the states that were gained from it did not become slave. This cut across party lines—Wilmot was a Democrat from Pennsylvania—and it heralded the realignment of American politics along sectional lines.

Soon after the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which finalized the taking over of half of Mexico, there was the Compromise of 1850, and by this time the split of the country was already posed; it was already talked about. And in fact Calhoun, who would die shortly afterward, all but advocated a division of the country, that is, the secession of the South. The Compromise of 1850 allowed California to become a free state, but it put off deciding on the rest of the former Mexican territories, and this was seen as allowing the possibility of slavery there. More grotesquely, it also created the Fugitive Slave Act, which made Northern states complicit in "returning" slaves who had run away from the South to the North. When they attempted to capture Anthony Burns, a runaway slave, in Boston and provoked angry mass protests, it really posed the question of the relationship between the North and the South. Frederick Douglass spelled this out when the Fugitive Slave Act was passed:

> "By an act of the American Congress, not yet two years old, slavery has been nationalized in its most horrible and revolting form. By that act, Mason and Dixon's line has been obliterated; New York has become as Virginia; and the power to hold, hunt, and sell men, women and children, as slaves, remains no longer a mere state institution, but is now an institution of the whole United States. The power is co-extensive with the star-spangled banner, and American Christianity."
>
> —"The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro" (1852)

Hull Museums

Slave attacked by slave catchers and their bloodhounds. Poster issued by Boston abolitionists in 1851 warned blacks following 1850 Fugitive Slave Law.

From the 1850 Compromise on—there were still more compromises—the Southern states were increasingly pushing the envelope. There was the Dred Scott decision, where the Supreme Court ruled, as we mention in our Mumia articles, that slavery was not only the law of the land in the South, but was the law of the land anyplace. It ruled that slave property must be protected, including in free states and that, in its famous statement, blacks had "no rights which the white man was bound to respect." This really gave rise to what would be a final showdown between the capitalist system in the North and the slavocracy in the South.

I want to make the point, however, that it was not something that even at the time was obvious, or that even many of the bourgeoisie accepted. When John Brown carried out his raid in 1859, he was roundly denounced by many, including by Abraham Lincoln. But it posed the question: How was the United States going to be ruled? Was it going to develop as a capitalist country or as a slave society? This is something that the Civil War, which is the subject of the next class, would decide, in what we call the Second American Revolution. ■

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100 St. George Street

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Wednesday, October 28, 6 p.m.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

UCLA, Haines Hall A78

For more information: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

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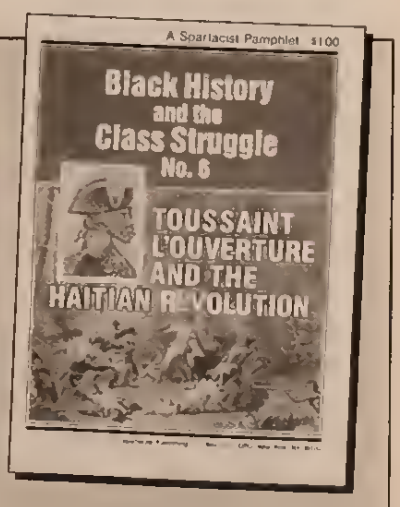
Thursday, October 29, 6:30 p.m.

The Capitalist State: Reform vs. Revolution

University of British Columbia
SUB Room 42V

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com



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Anti-Abortion Witchhunt in Australia

Full Access to RU486 Now! For Free Abortion on Demand!

We reprint below an article from Australasian Spartacist *No. 206 (Spring 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League of Australia, section of the International Communist League.*

Australasian **SPARTACIST**

AUGUST 31—A young Queensland couple, 19-year-old Tegan Leach and 21-year-old Sergie Brennan, are being subjected to a harrowing ordeal over the alleged use of the drug misoprostol to end the teenager's pregnancy last year. The couple were charged by police in April under archaic 110-year-old anti-abortion clauses in Queensland's Criminal Code. Tegan is the first woman in the state to be charged over procuring an abortion in more than half a century. If convicted, she faces up to seven years' jail. Her partner faces a three-year and possibly 14-year jail term for procuring and supplying a drug to procure an abortion. We say: Drop the charges against Tegan and Sergie now! It is in the interest of the labour movement and all defenders of democratic rights to vigorously take up their defence.

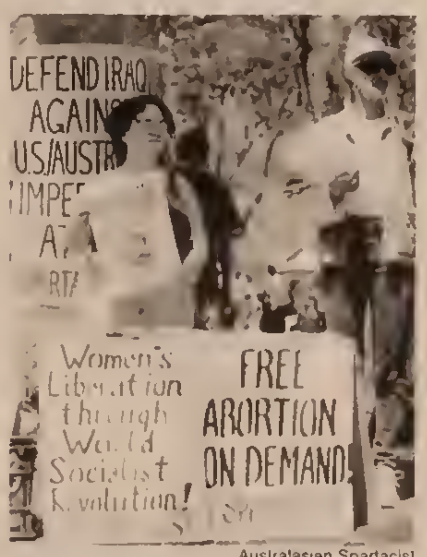
The state's witchhunt of the couple, overseen by the Queensland Labor government of Anna Bligh, has emboldened the anti-abortion bigots, who reportedly mobilised outside the couple's home. The pair was forced to flee the house after it was firebombed and Sergie's car vandalised. In this "deep north" state, riddled with religious backwardness and prejudice, the Labor government has ruled for over ten years, pushing racist "law and order" campaigns that serve to strengthen the powers of the police, who carry out brutal repression within Aboriginal communities.

A "pro-choice" feminist, Premier Bligh has backed the police prosecution of the couple, claiming the case is about the importation of misoprostol and its use without medical supervision. Flouting Queensland ALP [Australian Labor Party] state policy to repeal the anti-abortion laws from the criminal code, the premier reaffirmed a March election commitment made to the Australian Christian lobby that the party had no intention of pursuing abortion law reform. Bligh, a former student campaigner for abortion rights, declared any changes would be "a matter of a private member's bill" adding, "I certainly have no intention of introducing a private member's bill..." (*Australian*, 12 June). In fact, such a bill decriminalising abortion drafted in 2003 was repeatedly blocked by then-ALP premier, Peter Beattie, and Bligh herself when she took over the job.

With Section 282 of Queensland's Criminal Code technically only allowing a "surgical operation" to save a woman's life, the police prosecution of Leach and Brennan has raised widespread concern among doctors offering drug-induced medical abortions over possible prosecution of themselves and their patients. Prominent Cairns obstetrician, Dr Caroline de Costa, who was in the forefront of the 2005-06 campaign to overturn the federal government's ban on the abortion drug RU486, has stopped prescribing RU486/misoprostol and urged others to do likewise until the law is clarified. She has since been joined by doctors around the state, including from some 22 public hospitals, which carry out mostly medical abortions in cases of severe fetal abnormality or health risk.

Forcing the hand of the Bligh state government, Queensland's largest hospital, the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, suspended its medical abortion services in mid August. Usually performing about 80 late-term abortions each year, the hospital has now referred women needing such terminations interstate. The state Labor government rushed into damage control, declaring it would revise Section 282 of the code to allow for medical procedures. Bligh pointedly added that the government would not bow to pressure and decriminalise abortion in the state.

According to a poll reported on the Pro Choice Qld website, 79 percent of Queenslanders want abortion out of the criminal code. The demand for abortion rights is the demand for a simple, basic democratic right to a medical or surgical procedure, among the safest in the world. It is outrageous that the capitalist state and its bourgeois parliamentarians should have the power to interfere in people's most intimate, private decisions, including a woman's decision to have an abortion. As one Cairns doctor recently said, "I do not believe police should be standing behind the bedroom door" (*Cairns Post*, 22 August). State out of the bedroom! We fight for free abortion and contraception on demand, without qualification, linked to a program of free, quality health care for all. These are vital necessities for women and for working people as a whole, along with paid maternity and paternity leave and free 24-hour childcare facilities at work and in the community.



Australasian Spartacist

Spartacist supporters at Sydney International Women's Day rally, 2003.

Rudd's Labor Government Enforces Anti-Woman Bigotry

In the context of the current global capitalist economic crisis, working people face increasing hardship and economic uncertainty. In July, the Labor prime minister, Kevin Rudd, told the populace to brace for rising prices, interest rates and unemployment on the "long, tough and bumpy road" of "economic recovery." In other words, any resurgence of capitalist profits will be built on the misery of working people. The loss of full-time jobs has been matched by a growth in part-time work, reinforcing a decades-long push towards increased casualisation of the workforce. Often the hardest hit by attacks on jobs and conditions are women workers, who on average earn 17.5 percent less than men.

Barely 50 percent of women have access to paid maternity leave, forcing thousands of low-income-earning mothers back to work early out of financial necessity. As the economic crisis unfolded, the government talked of shelving the introduction of a national paid maternity leave scheme. In the May budget, it announced an 18-week national parental leave scheme that won't be introduced until 2011. Even then it will be means-tested and only pay the poverty-level minimum wage while denying recipients family tax benefits and other payments.

Families also face a health care system in crisis, with pregnant women in labour being turned away from hospitals due to lack of specialist staff and others having miscarriages in the toilets because of bed shortages. Parents are also in dire need of accessible, affordable childcare. A 2008 UNICEF report on childcare slammed Australia as third-worst out of 25 developed countries, spending less than 1 percent of GDP on early childhood services. With the widening gap between rich and poor, increasing numbers of children are growing up in households struggling on or below the poverty line. Child poverty rates stand at more than 10 percent. Aboriginal communities have been subjected to racist "quarantining" of welfare payments for more than two years [replacing half the cash payments with cards that can be used only for specific items and at specific retailers]. Liberal and Labor MPs alike have called for quarantining welfare payments across the entire country.

A moralistic, god-fearing Christian, Kevin Rudd is well known for his reactionary anti-abortion views. From voting for the RU486 ban in 1996 to allowing a "conscience" vote on abortion issues, from supporting the outrageous ban on gay marriage in 2004 to upholding these discriminatory laws in office today, the pro-capitalist Labor Party is clearly no friend of women and the oppressed.

For Access to RU486, Free of Charge, Now!

In 2006, when federal parliament voted to overturn its effective ban on RU486, transferring control to the state-appointed Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), we wrote:

> "It is a good thing that control over RU486 no longer rests in the hands of the anti-abortion bigot Abbott [then federal Liberal health minister]. Australian women now at least have the possibility of accessing a drug that two million users in more than 30 different countries have found to be safe and effective for more than a decade... However, while the TGA is expected to approve the drug within the year, access is likely to be severely restricted, as is the case in New Zealand, and there is also no guarantee that it will be affordable for working and poor women. Of course the TGA could bury RU486 for years. *For access to RU486, free of charge, now!*"
>
> —*Australasian Spartacist* No. 194, Autumn 2006

Brian Casey

Sergie Brennan and Tegan Leach face years in prison under reactionary anti-abortion laws.

Importation and administration of RU486 is so far restricted to doctors approved by the TGA under stringent conditions, with 61 reportedly authorised as of early August. The latest TGA approvals, announced amidst the growing outcry over Queensland's current anti-abortion case, include authorisation for 14 doctors from Marie Stopes International clinics around the country to provide RU486 in cases where women are less than nine weeks pregnant and "meet eligibility criteria covering standard surgical abortions" (*Australian*, 11 August). The approval sent anti-abortion fanatics into a frenzy, labelling this women's health organisation "fundamentally evil" and grotesquely comparing it to "terrorists."

Up until this decade, anti-abortion laws were included in all state and territory criminal codes. However, common law rulings in the 1970s and '80s gave tens of thousands of women across the country access, albeit restricted, to this medical procedure. The availability of relatively cheap, safe abortions in most major cities, despite the continued existence of legislation making it a crime, was in large part a tribute to the militant struggles of courageous fighters for abortion rights such as the late Dr. Bertram Wainer.

In 2002 the ACT [Australian Capital Territory] repealed the anti-abortion provisions in its Criminal Code and last year Victoria also repealed its laws. However, even here restrictions and bureaucratic hurdles still exist, particularly for the small number of women desperately seeking late-term abortions. In the ACT, obtaining an abortion after the first twelve weeks requires approval from a hospital "ethics" committee. In Victoria, the Brumby ALP government's abortion law reform bill removed all restrictions within the first 24 weeks, but requires the agreement of two doctors for later abortions.

We defend every gain won from the capitalist rulers against attack by the state and other reactionary forces such as the Catholic Church which is currently threatening legal action against aspects of the Victorian abortion law reform. While reforms can be won under capitalism, they are necessarily partial and can be reversed by the bourgeoisie. They remain under threat as long as bourgeois class rule remains. This is seen in the ongoing attacks on abortion rights in the U.S., including the assassination of Dr George Tiller earlier this year by an anti-abortion fanatic. Dr Tiller heroically provided abortion services to women for more than 35 years, despite massive harassment, both legal and extralegal, against him.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

That the state can dictate whether a woman can or cannot have an abortion

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Down With Age of Consent Laws! Government Out of the Bedroom!

Free Helen Goddard!

We reprint below a letter to the Southwark Crown Court by the Partisan Defence Committee, published in Workers Hammer *No. 208 (Autumn 2009), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). The PDC is a class-struggle legal and social defense organization associated with the SL/B. Since the publication of this letter, Helen Goddard has been sentenced by a British court to 15 months in prison. She has also been banned from working with children and placed on the "Sex Offenders Register" for ten years. We demand her immediate freedom.*

WORKERS HAMMER

The Partisan Defence Committee demands the immediate dropping of all charges against 26-year-old music teacher Helen Goddard, a victim of the government's anti-sex witch hunt. Goddard, nicknamed the "Jazz Lady" by her students, is due to be sentenced on 21 September in Southwark Crown Court under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 for the "crime" of having had sex with a 15-year-old female pupil. According to the *Telegraph* online, having admitted six counts of sex with the girl who is under the age of consent, Goddard now faces a possible sentence of *up to 14 years in prison* and has been ordered to sign the Sex Offenders Register.

Goddard and the pupil at City of London School for Girls were involved in a close and sexual relationship, a perfectly natural thing that should be no business of either the school or the state. There is *no* suggestion from anyone, including the girl's parents, that the sex was anything but consensual. Now Goddard's promising career as a musician and teacher is in tatters, she has been thrown to the media wolves, both her and her partner's personal lives violated.

The puritanical witch hunt against "sex offenders" waged by the Blair and Brown Labour governments is a modern-day version of Christian fundamentalist crusades against "sin." Adults engaged in inter-generational sex, especially between teachers and pupils, are treated as though they are de facto child rapists and murderers. The Sex Offenders Register is a witch hunter's charter, containing thousands of names of totally innocent people—e.g., some merely cautioned for possessing "dirty" pictures—now blacklisted, stigmatised and worse for the rest of their lives.

State interference aims at regimenting society to conform to the mythical sexual "norm" of one man on one woman for life, denying the complexity and variety innate in human sexuality. State repression will not alter the fact that children and teenagers develop sexual attractions towards other children and adults, including their teachers. "Age of consent" laws giving the capitalist state the right to determine at what age youth can engage in sex are an invasion of privacy. The guiding principle in these matters should be that of mutual effective consent.

Facundo Arrizabalaga

We protest the gross abuse perpetrated by the state on Helen Goddard and demand: *Drop the charges now!* ■

Polanski...

(continued from page 12)

Superior Court judge Peter Espinoza. With perverse logic, Espinoza acknowledged that there was "substantial misconduct," but refused to consider dismissal unless Polanski personally showed up in his court to face certain arrest.

With the frame-up story out—including in court—the prosecutors had nothing to lose in gunning for Polanski. Wells now ludicrously claims that he lied on camera and assumed the film would not be shown in the U.S. In response, Marina Zenovich, who made the documentary, noted that Wells had in fact "corroborated the account of events that he gave in my film" to the *New York Times* in an article printed on 17 July 2008.

The motives of the lying and vindictive American prosecutors and judges are clear enough, but the Swiss government's sudden willingness to kowtow to U.S. authorities has raised some eyebrows. Polanski, after all, has for many years owned a home in Switzerland that he frequently visited. Rumors abound that throwing Polanski to the wolves is a bid for leniency in the IRS investigation of the Swiss banking giant UBS on charges of assisting American citizens in tax evasion. "The government is so traumatized by the IRS and whole UBS scandal," commented former Swiss Socialist parliamentarian Jean Ziegler. "If any American authority asks for anything in Switzerland, they get it in 24 hours" (*AP*, 29 September).

Whatever machinations the government is employing against Polanski, we oppose this outrageous witchhunt, as we have from the outset. In the U.S., the morality police are howling for Polanski's blood, including the *New York Times* in a 30 September editorial. In France, after officials in the French government objected to Polanski's arrest, they were met by howls of indignation from other politicians demanding that Polanski face "justice" in the U.S.

At the same time, Polanski has received support from other filmmakers like Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen, who himself was the target of an anti-sex witchhunt (see "Woody Allen Crucified on 'Family Values'," *WV* No. 558, 4 September 1992). But among those who defend him, many accept that Polanski committed a "crime" in 1977. And since that time, "sexual tolerance has shriveled," as noted by Alexander Cockburn in *CounterPunch* (2-4 October), with increasing hysteria over "pedophilia" and the attendant mushrooming of reactionary laws.

We demand an end to reactionary "age of consent" and "statutory rape" laws, which falsely conflate consensual sex with violent crimes. We oppose all laws against "crimes without victims" (which also include gambling, prostitution, drug use and pornography). *Government out of the bedroom! Free Roman Polanski!*

At the time of Polanski's original persecution, we were virtually alone on the left in defending him. We reprint below our article, "Stop the Puritan Witchhunt Against Roman Polanski!" which first appeared in *WV* No. 192, 10 February 1978. The political points in that piece are as relevant today as they were then, over three decades ago.

* * *

Internationally acclaimed film director Roman Polanski has been driven out of the U.S. by a vicious and vindictive official witchhunt. His legal tribulations began last March 11 when he was arrested in the lobby of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel by Los Angeles police, responding to a woman's charge that he had screwed her 13-year-old daughter. Ever since, Polanski's nightmarish persecution—which included 42 days in the Chino, California state prison for degrading "psychiatric observation"—has escalated.

Polanski was recently released from Chino upon completion of the "psychiatric diagnosis," which was reportedly "favorable." However, Superior Court judge Rittenband immediately called the report a "whitewash" and informed the director's lawyer that he intended to sentence Polanski to an additional 48 days in prison, to be followed by "voluntary deportation." "He doesn't belong in this country," proclaimed this state-empowered guardian of the nation's morals. Polanski, who holds French citizenship, fled to Paris on February 1, where he remains while the prosecution plans ways to extradite him.

Rittenband, known locally as a "hanging judge," obviously intends to make Polanski into an example. Douglas Dalton, the defendant's attorney, has pointed out that of the 44 people convicted in Los Angeles County on similar charges in 1976, *none* ever spent any time in jail. Former state attorney general Younger also sought to make political hay out of the case as part of his general "law-and-order" campaign.

The national press has covered the case with a mixture of pious outrage and amused contempt as another typical "Hollywood scandal." *Time* (28 March 1977) sneeringly referred to the director's "tawdry troubles," while the *New York Post* (2 February) devoted a full-page spread to the "new Hollywood" and Polanski's "rat pack" of sexually swinging friends, making him out to be some kind of exotic, neurotic freak. This is not the first time that the state, gleefully cheered on by the sensation-mongering press, has driven prominent figures out of Hollywood. Errol Flynn, by all accounts an amiable man who never hurt anyone, was endlessly being dragged through the courts on account of his well-known preference for young women.

Ingrid Bergman was even denounced in Congress at the height of the McCarthyite witchhunt for her nerve in defiling her saintly "Joan of Arc" screen image by bearing a child out of wedlock to the Italian filmmaker Roberto Rosselini. Charlie Chaplin too was driven out of the "land of opportunity"—largely for political reasons, of course, but with a good dose of nasty sexual innuendo thrown in. The news-starved press runs periodic "exposés" of glamorous Hollywood in order to simultaneously titillate the public—for the most part trapped in deadly dull, poor and restricted lives—and channel their resentment against the rich and famous into satisfying but empty moral outrage.

What is genuinely "tawdry" and sordid about the Polanski case is not the actual incident itself, but the vile official persecution and the hideous hypocrisy of it all. The national press has carefully "omitted" the real facts of the case. The director had pleaded guilty on August 8 to unlawful intercourse with a minor in return for dismissal of other sex and drug charges against him, including rape, child molestation, oral copulation, sodomy and providing drugs to a minor. However, statements at the trial make it clear that what happened was hardly a case of rape!

The 13-year-old whom Polanski was accused of raping was described in the *Los Angeles Times* (20 August 1977) as "an aspiring actress," whose mother had known Polanski for over a year and given permission to photograph her daughter for the French edition of *Vogue* magazine. One of those photography sessions with the celebrated director turned into an evening of sipping champagne, nude bathing in a Jacuzzi whirlpool bath and consumption by the girl of part of a Quaalude (a fashionable sedative). Following this there was sexual intercourse (translated in the press as "drugging and raping").

It came out in court, however, that the girl had been "experimenting" with Quaaludes since the age of 10 or 11, and had a 17-year-old boyfriend with whom she had had prior sexual intercourse. A police detective on the case described her as looking to be "between 16 and 18," while the girl's mother at one point described her daughter rather lamely as "precocious in the midst of growing up." Even Judge Rittenband in his probation report was forced to admit the blatantly obvious sexual maturity of the girl: "the prosecutrix was a well-developed young girl, who looked older than her years, and regrettably not unschooled in sexual matters."

The incident occurred in the home of movie star Jack Nicholson, and it was partially on the testimony of Nicholson's current roommate Angelica Huston, who had returned home later that evening, that Polanski was charged. Of course, her eager cooperation with the police could have had something to do with the fact that detectives searching the place for "evidence" found a vial of cocaine in her room.

Sexual and social life in southern California, with its thriving drug culture and troupes of precocious and sexually active groupies hanging about the fringes of the entertainment industry, produces thousands of "aspiring actresses" (and young male would-be "rock stars") like the one Polanski had the misfortune to run into. Regardless of what one thinks of the

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Australia...

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exemplifies the oppression women face in capitalist society. This oppression is rooted in the age-old institution of the family, which arose with the advent of private property as the mechanism for passing property from one generation to the next. The family serves in general as the social means for rearing the next generation, and under capitalism, where the masses of youth are slated for wage slavery or service as cannon fodder in the armed forces, it seeks to instil obedience to authority. It serves as an ideological transmission belt for the "values" of the capitalist rulers, inculcating religious backwardness as a brake on social consciousness. Along with organised religion and the state apparatus, the institution of the family is a fundamental prop for the capitalist system of oppression and exploitation.

The private property system, upheld by the capitalist state, and the family are the most basic and deeply intertwined aspects of class society. They cannot be "reformed" away. While fighting to defend every gain wrested through hard struggle from this ruling class, the inescapable conclusion must be that the entire capitalist system must go. To win freedom for women and all the oppressed requires a workers socialist revolution to overturn capitalist property relations and the creation of a workers state that rests on a collectivised and planned economy where production is for human need, not profit.

A workers government will he able to begin to provide social alternatives—in caring for children, the sick, the elderly, for housework, etc.—to the oppressive family structure. The young Soviet workers state created by the 1917 Russian Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party acted on this understanding of women's oppression and did more to liberate women than any other society in history. While inheriting a largely peasant society devastated by the First World War and bloody Civil War, the Bolsheviks made heroic efforts to replace the family with social alternatives. They were the first government in the world to overturn criminal penalties for abortion in 1920 (health concerns prevented earlier legalisation in those days before antibiotics). (See "The Russian Revolution and the Emancipation of Women," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 59, Spring 2006.)

VAAP

Women's demonstration in Russia, 19 March 1917. Banner reads: "As Long as the Woman Is a Slave There Cannot Be Freedom—Long Live Women's Equality." Following 1917 October Revolution, Russia was first country to overturn criminal penalties for abortion.

Until its counterrevolutionary destruction in 1991-92, the Soviet Union remained a workers state, albeit degenerated under a nationalist, parasitic, bureaucratic caste, which usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat in a political counterrevolution beginning under Stalin in 1923-24. We stood for the unconditional military defence of the USSR against imperialist attack and internal capitalist counterrevolution and called for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misleaders. Capitalist restoration in 1991-92 was a deep blow to the world working class, not least women in the former USSR, and conditions the current period of capitalist reaction.

Marxism vs. Feminism

Young women who hate the ingrained anti-woman bigotry of this society often refer to themselves as feminist. However, feminism is politically incapable of resolving the most basic aspects of women's oppression because it functions entirely within the framework of bourgeois rule. Because it asserts the main division in society is between men and women rather than class versus class, feminism necessarily reflects the ideology of the politically and economically dominant class, the capitalists. The fate of many 1970s "radical" feminists, such as Anna Bligh, is instructive. Rejecting the necessary fight to overthrow the entire capitalist system, they secured careers in the Labor Party and the trade-union bureaucracy and have helped to oversee cutbacks and union-busting carried out by the ALP federally and in the states, which have particularly hit their working-class "sisters."

In contrast to feminism, Marxism, recognising that the class question is decisive, rests on a fundamentally different, *proletarian*, class axis. Every real gain won by working people and the oppressed is, and will be, the result of hard class and social struggle, not attempts to pressure bourgeois politicians and the courts. We look to the power of the working class as the motor force for social progress. Our understanding of the centrality of the working class and a revolutionary perspective in fighting for the liberation of women is counterposed to the outlook peddled by reformist left groups who reinforce feminist illusions among women.

In a recent article on abortion rights, the "socialist feminists" of the Freedom Socialist Party (FSP)/Radical Women (RW) call to "trounce the bigots, once and for all, through a massive, broad-based movement," declaring that "community organising is what has won just about every gain of working people" (*Radical Women Supplement*, Winter/Spring 2009). They continue:

> "Radical Women calls on feminists to join together to build a united front capable of stopping the right wing and winning survival needs such as full reproductive rights, affordable housing, childcare and education, free healthcare, decent paying jobs, expanded human services and an end to imperialist war."

Trying to square the circle between feminism, a bourgeois ideology, and socialism, the FSP/RW are in essence Laborite reformists, pushing class-collaborationist schemas. Their calls for feminist unity can only serve to tie working women to their capitalist class enemy and breed illusions in capitalist politicians like feminist Labor premier Anna Bligh, whose cops are prosecuting Leach and Brennan today. Their demands to "stop the right wing" and for classless community organising echo the Laborite pro-capitalist union misleaders, who push cross-class community campaigns and ALP lesser-evil parliamentary cretinism, burying the need for an independent class-struggle fight, including for women's rights. The FSP/RW's anti-Marxist call absurdly asserts that imperialist wars can be ended by a feminist united front rather than the only road forward: the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist/imperialist system through working-class revolution.

What is essential is a fight to forge an internationalist multiracial workers party to lead the working class in a socialist revolution that sweeps away this system of capitalist exploitation, racist discrimination and women's oppression. The indispensable task of the revolutionary vanguard party, which we seek to build, is to bring to the working class the understanding that they must fight for all the oppressed in their battle to free themselves from wage slavery. The entry of women into the working class opened the way to their liberation: their position at the point of production gives them social power, along with the entire working class, to overturn the capitalist system. ***For women's liberation through socialist revolution!*** ■

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scene as a whole, its all-too-obvious reality makes absurd Rittenband's attempts to force rigid morality of the Victorian era into L.A. freeways and bedrooms.

Official repression and enforced standards of sexual activity have brought oppression and pain throughout history, from the cruel feudal "right of the first night" through the Catholic church's intensely detailed rules on various sexual sins to the Victorians' complete denial of the sexuality of women and children and their artificial prolongation of childhood. The sexual "norms" which the American state upholds today reek with hypocrisy in a society where scientific research into human sexuality is only now beginning to be published on a mass basis; where scientific breakthroughs in contraception have removed the legitimate fear of pregnancy, which for ages stood as a barrier to sexual pleasure; and where rigid taboos based on ignorance have lost much of their force.

All those laws which define "sex crimes" in America today are fundamentally aimed at glorifying and propping up the obscene and repressive prison of the family, for centuries the main institution for the oppression of women and children. The reactionary sentiment whipped up by the persecution of "sex deviants" is fueled also by recognition that the family is the individual's shelter in a hostile world. Only a broader social vision of the eventual ***replacement*** of the family as part of the transition to a classless society can defuse these fears that lumpenization and social collapse are the only alternative to bourgeois morality.

The media's exploitation of the Polanski case is more than mere sensationalism. His prosecution, like the furor over "kiddie porn," feeds into the sanctimonious "Save Our Children" crusade epitomized by Anita Bryant's anti-homosexual witchhunt—a reactionary offensive which hides behind the "innocence" of children to enforce bourgeois morality through the vindictive persecution of "deviants."

The victimization of those held to threaten the prevailing norms of family life often takes the most extreme forms. In November a 23-year-old princess and her commoner husband were executed in Saudi Arabia as "sex criminals." By the traditions of her tribe, which is simultaneously the Saudi ruling class, shooting her and hacking off her husband's head by sword in the public market of Jidda were socially quite "moral." Judge Rittenband was not able to have Polanski beheaded in order to protect the "American Way of Life," but the principle that the state has the right to enforce a "norm" on private sexual activity is equally held by the U.S. bourgeoisie and the Bedouin sheiks. Their methods simply vary a bit.

There are indeed very real and pervasive sex crimes committed in America today, but they are not only nor necessarily the ones splashed across the pages of the tabloid press. Fear, guilt and repression are loaded on the very young for even having sexual thoughts. Adolescent youth are inhumanly and artifically segregated from one another in schools and colleges. The religious strictures of the Catholic church and other religious sects, including orthodox Judaism, keep thousands of women trapped in an endless cycle of poverty, pregnancy and ever more mouths to feed. The aged are locked into grim and tiny rooms to die as their wardens debate "Should sex be allowed in old age homes?"

In ignorance and shame thousands of poor young women are forced into dangerous abortions without Medicaid, while the wealthy manage as they always have. The more unfortunate must either bear their unwanted children or else be sterilized permanently in government hospitals while great debate rages as to whether the young should be "exposed" to contraceptives and birth control information. There is also the hideous frustration and sexual tension built up within the family itself, with attendant beatings and brutalization of children, including their sexual mistreatment. Rape and these other very real crimes, along with the prostitution which is the eternal companion of enforced monogamy, are the sordid reality behind "public morality."

Polanski has been made the latest public target in the state's vindictive attempts to uphold the puritan myth and hide this reality. Even his brilliant and often powerful films, like "Cul de Sac," "Knife in the Water," "Repulsion," and more recently "Rosemary's Baby" and "Chinatown," have been used against him. As one Columbia Pictures executive moaned, "Roman's got such a bad reputation for being a pervert film maker, he's going to

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Women and Revolution

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Iran...

(continued from page 1)

pipelines running across Central Asia, rather than through seaborne routes vulnerable to American naval interdiction."

That is an eminently reasonable long-term strategic concern on the part of Beijing. Obama took office pledging to draw down U.S. troop levels in Iraq in order to pursue what a significant portion of the U.S. bourgeoisie sees as more strategic aims, including the occupation of Afghanistan. A major consideration behind this policy is the encirclement of China, a bureaucratically deformed workers state where capitalist rule was overthrown by the 1949 Revolution.

Ultimately, the U.S. imperialists aim to restore capitalist rule in China, and for this they have a two-pronged strategy: military pressure combined with capitalist economic penetration. At the same time, the Democrats, backed by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, have been in the forefront of those pushing anti-China chauvinist protectionism. It is vital for the international proletariat to stand for the unconditional military defense of China and the other remaining deformed workers states—Cuba, North Korea and Vietnam—while fighting for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers and establish regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism.

For Workers Revolution in Iran!

After Tehran indicated last week that it would be willing to send most of its enriched uranium to another country (Russia and France have volunteered) for further refinement into fuel, Obama administration officials toned down the calls for a formal embargo on gasoline shipments to Iran. Obama called the proposal "a step towards building confidence that Iran's program is in fact peaceful" (*New York Times*, 3 October). Washington has defined its posture toward Iran in recent months with an eye to the political turmoil in that country, into which the imperialists have sought to intervene, most openly through intensified radio broadcasts.

WV photo

Spartacists at San Francisco antiwar demonstration, October 2007.

The fraud surrounding the June 12 reelection of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad triggered a series of mass demonstrations in Tehran and other cities that were brutally attacked by the police and paramilitary Basij militias, leaving dozens of protesters dead and thousands in jail. On September 18, the regime's annual pro-Palestinian rally for Jerusalem Day, also known as Quds Day, was overshadowed by a mass mobilization of tens of thousands of anti-government protesters. More recently, there have been several student demonstrations in Tehran, including a September 28 protest at Tehran University that forced Ahmadinejad to cancel a visit there. We call on the international workers movement to demand: Free all anti-government protesters!

While including heterogeneous forces, the opposition demonstrations have been politically subordinate to one side in what is essentially a falling out between rival factions within the ruling clerical elite. The main opposition candidate, Mir Hussein Moussavi, one of the founders of the Islamic Republic, served as prime minister from 1981 to 1989, when untold thousands of leftists, Kurds and women's rights activists were slaughtered in Iran's prisons. As we wrote in "Down With the Clerical Regime! No Support to 'Reform' Mullahs!" (*WV* No. 939, 3 July): "The workers and oppressed of Iran have *no interest* in supporting *either* of the cabals fighting over how best to pursue the mullahs' bloody rule."

A 5 August article on the liberal *Huffington Post* Web site by Robert Naiman of Just Foreign Policy described how a formally declared U.S.-sponsored gasoline embargo could embarrass Iranian oppositionists such as Moussavi:

> "If he says he supports the embargo, he may be politically toast in Iran: every bad thing that happens to Iranians as a result of the embargo will be blamed on Mousavi by the Iranian government. If he says he is against it, then he's saying that the signature Iran policy of the West is a policy to attack Iranian civilians."

AP

Iranian riot police attack supporters of opposition leader Moussavi at Tehran University, June 14.

All sides in the tumult shaking Iran today hark back to the 1979 overthrow of the country's despised autocrat, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, as a model for their political activity. At that time, the convulsive opposition to the monarchy included powerful workers strikes in the oil fields and throughout the country; Iran could have become the cockpit of proletarian revolution in the Near East. However, the mass mobilizations were channeled into a reactionary crusade for an "Islamic Republic," with virtually the entire left in Iran and internationally cheering on the mullah-dominated opposition led by Ayatollah Khomeini. Uniquely on the left, we raised the call: "Down With the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini! For Workers Revolution in Iran!"

Today, while promoting the Democrats in the U.S., the U.S. reformist left repeats the treacherous policies of 30 years ago by lining up behind one or another wing of the ruling clergy in Iran. Workers World Party (WWP) and the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL), a split-off from WWP, have sided with the pro-Ahmadinejad wing of the clerics against the protests, claiming that in this way they are opposing U.S. imperialism. The International Socialist Organization (ISO), in the September-October issue of *International Socialist Review*—while scoring some easy polemical points against the WWP and PSL—makes not even a token effort to distinguish itself politically from the Moussavi-led opposition. Instead, they write that Moussavi

> "has become a symbol in the fight for democracy in the eyes of millions. A very elementary demand of the mass movement—that the regime live up to its claim of being a republic and count people's votes—has become a gateway for further radicalization."

In fact, in 1979 the ISO, like virtually the entire left internationally, unabashedly hailed Khomeini's "mass movement," which aimed to enslave women and throw back social progress by centuries. The ISO headlined one article "The Form—Religious, the Spirit—Revolution!" (*Socialist Worker*, January 1979). The establishment of a Shi'ite theocracy following the overthrow of the Shah resulted in murderous terror directed against leftists and working-class militants, Kurds and other minorities, homosexuals and unveiled women.

Eduard Bernstein, the father of "socialist" revisionism, wrote in *Evolutionary Socialism* (1899) that "the ultimate aim of socialism is nothing, but the movement is everything." This statement represents the reformist politics promoted by the ISO. In contrast, we stand in the tradition of Lenin, who built the Bolshevik Party that led the 1917 Russian Revolution. Iran is a country of combined and uneven development. The only road to genuine social and economic modernization, to liberating Iran from imperialist subjugation, to freeing Iranian women from enslavement, to winning the right of national self-determination for the Kurds and the myriad other oppressed nationalities, lies in the smashing of capitalist class rule in Iran through proletarian socialist revolution as part of the fight for a socialist federation of the Near East. The fundamental question facing the Iranian proletariat today is the need to build a Marxist workers party that fights for the class independence of the proletariat.

The conquest of power by the proletariat does not complete the socialist revolution, but only opens it by changing the direction of social development. Short of the international extension of the revolution, particularly to the advanced, industrialized imperialist centers, that social development will be arrested and ultimately reversed. Defense of those subjugated by the imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in the U.S. and other imperialist centers, and ultimately requires a proletarian struggle for power. If the imperialists are not to plunge humanity into nuclear Armageddon, they must be overthrown through socialist revolutions internationally. This underscores the urgent need to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution.■

Spartacist Forums

U.S. Imperialism: Enemy of Women's Rights Internationally—For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

- Honor George Tiller! For Free Abortion on Demand!
- For Free, Quality Health Care!
- Break with the Democrats—Forge a Workers Party!

BAY AREA
Saturday
October 10, 3 p.m.
The Women's Building
3543 18th Street
San Francisco
(near 16th St /Mission BART)
(510) 839-0851
slbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES
Saturday
October 10, 2 p.m.
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
3300 Wilshire Blvd.
(2 blocks west of Vermont/Wilshire Red Line Station)
(213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY
Saturday
October 10, 3 p.m.
CWA Local 1180 Hall
6 Harrison Street
Manhattan
(1 train to Franklin, west on Franklin to Hudson, 1 block south to Harrison)
(212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

Polanski...

(continued from page 9)

be judged guilty by his work" (*Time*, 28 March 1977).

What emerges from the director's life, however, is a pattern of successful creative achievement in the face of a pattern of violence and tragedy. As a young boy Polanski saw his parents ripped away (to disappear permanently in the concentration camps) by Nazi stormtroopers. At 15 he was beaten almost to death with an iron bar by a maniac. After achieving a reputation as a talented filmmaker in Stalinist Poland, he emigrated to the West—where his pregnant wife, the actress Sharon Tate, was hideously slaughtered at home along with the couple's friends by the crazed Manson family. And now Polanski has had the humiliation and torture of spending over a month in prison for "psychiatric observation." (If this had occurred in the Soviet Union, where dissidents are barbarously locked up in mental hospitals, the director would already be high on the list of Jimmy Carter's "human rights" campaign.)

Yet to the state of California Polanski is a "sex criminal" and it threatens more prison. It is no wonder why the victim chose to leave America. As he rightly observed, "They spent 42 days trying to drive me bizarre, but thank god I'm smart and rich..." (*New York Post*, 7 February). He went on:

> "In America, California, I lose my wife, my baby, my friends, perhaps my sanity and almost my freedom. No, I say, no! The Nazis couldn't take it away from me, nor could the grief of my losses. And this little whore and the California laws won't either. I have given much and they have taken too much from me."

Good for him. We are cheered to see that this ordeal of puritanical witchhunting has not broken Roman Polanski's spirit.

The Polanski case has stirred up the poisonous fears and vicious repression which underlies bourgeois morality. As communists we oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated or decreed "norms." The guiding principle for sexual relations between people should be that of effective consent—that is, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. We hold that any and all consensual relations between individuals are purely their own concern, and the state has no business interfering in human sexual activity.

Drop the charges against Roman Polanski! No extradition! Stop the puritanical witchhunt!■

Transit...

(continued from page 12)

who owns a fleet of sports cars, but it speaks volumes about the greedy, corrupt and racist ruling class that is going after TWU Local 100 yet again. In the same piece, Kalikow all but admits that he provoked the December 2005 strike by demanding a union-busting new pension tier that would have foisted a 6 percent pay deduction on new hires. In response to that MTA provocation (and many others), subway and bus workers walked off the job and gave the transit bosses a taste of union power.

But since that time, the Local 100 misleaders have played by *all* the bosses' rules, demonstrating allegiance to the MTA, the Taylor Law and the capitalist Democratic Party at every turn. Toussaint even backed Democratic state attorney general Eliot Spitzer for governor in 2006 after Spitzer had put him in jail! In response to the MTA's latest move, Toussaint & Co. issued a flyer titled "MTA Tries to Weasel Out—Get Ready to Rock 'n' Roll" (August 27) that makes one obvious point: "It seems that arbitration is 'binding'—but only when it goes against us, and not 'hinding' if it doesn't go their way."

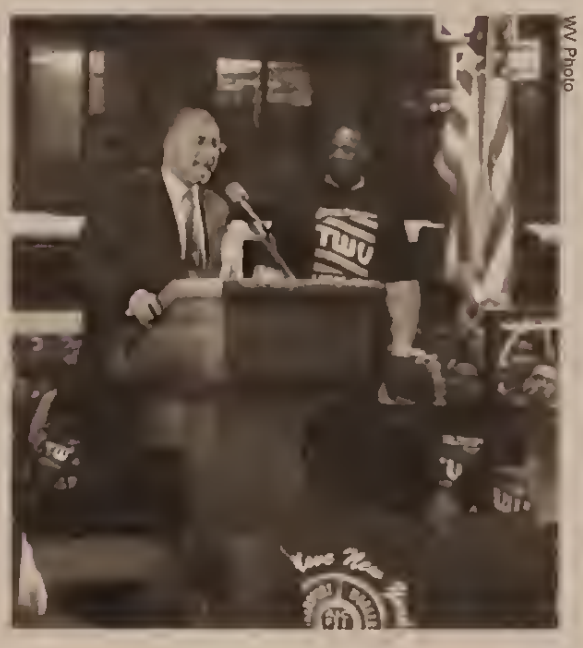
Long a weapon in the bosses' anti-union arsenal, binding arbitration is designed to short-circuit workers struggle, stop strikes and leave union members with no say in the final contract. Arbitration is a trap that puts the fate of union members in the hands of a supposedly "neutral" board that is in reality stacked on the side of the capitalist class. The interests of the capitalist class and the working class are irreconcilably counterposed, but the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy embraces arbitration to keep the lid on workers struggles, like the kind that built the unions in the first place and won genuine gains for our class. The labor traitors push illusions that the Taylor Law can be used against the bosses and that the capitalist state can be neutral, when in fact it is the main instrument for maintaining capitalist wage slavery. That's why the TWU tops and the rest of New York's labor officialdom talk only about "reform" of the Taylor Law through pathetic lobbying efforts in Albany.

TWU Local 100 and MTA negotiators jointly agreed to arbitration even *before* the last contract expired on 15 January 2009. Shortly before that, Toussaint and the Local 100 Executive Board signed a no-strike pledge that was the quid pro quo for the restoration of the union's dues checkoff, which had been revoked following the strike (see "TWU Local 100 Tops Sign No-Strike Pledge," *WV* No. 926, 5 December 2008). In fact, the arbitrator's decision comes in the context of numerous sellouts by the TWU tops, not least their refusal to wage any serious struggle against the recent fare hike or the MTA's longstanding plan to ax 600 station agent jobs.

Now that the deal is threatened, the Toussaint bureaucracy has correctly warned that "every single worker in New York City subject to the Taylor Law should pay heed." If the city rulers get away with putting the squeeze on Local 100, it will be open season on the rest of NYC labor. But the TWU misleaders' idea of "fight back by any means necessary" is to file legal papers defending the anti-labor Taylor Law and the system of arbitration that keeps union power in check. This is an example of their class collaboration, which subordinates workers to the capitalist class enemy.

The Local 100 tops are trying to focus workers' ire at Mayor Bloomberg while

TWU workers on the picket line during December 2005 NYC transit strike.



Bill Thompson, Democratic candidate for mayor of New York, addresses September 29 TWU rally. Union bureaucrats promote "labor friendly" capitalist politicians, tie workers to their class enemy.

covering for the Democrats. Toussaint & Co., bowing to pressure from an angry membership, have called for a mass union rally at MTA headquarters on September 29 and for a "day of outrage" at work locations in October. But at the same time the bureaucrats are attempting to channel this anger into boosting the electoral fortunes of city Democratic Party politicians, including mayoral candidate Bill Thompson. Some Dems talk a "labor friendly" line around election time, but they all support the Taylor Law and serve the Wall Street rulers with the same "due diligence" as the Republicans. The upcoming union rallies, like many before, will be built to boost Democratic Party politicians. Labor must break with the Democrats and all other capitalist parties.

Every wing of the current TWU Local 100 bureaucracy shares this program of reliance on the political representatives and agencies of the class enemy, including the "Take Back Our Union" (TBOU) and "United for Change" slates headed by John Samuelsen and J.P. Patafio respectively. Both of these former close allies of Toussaint ran in the recent union elections (for which votes will not be counted until December) against the in-bureaucrats loyal to outgoing president Toussaint. TBOU issued a leaflet titled "The Union's Arbitration Fight Back Strategy is Missing a Key Component"—which turns out to be pressuring the governor and not letting him "off the hook." The way forward is to mobilize labor's power, not begging capitalist politicians for "support." Following the practice of New Directions, these out-bureaucrats see nothing wrong with launching anti-union court suits, which put the union under the thumb of the capitalist state.

One left-talking grouplet, *Revolutionary Transit Worker* (*RTW*), supported by the League for the Revolutionary Party, sometimes attempts to distance itself from the pro-Democratic Party pack. In a September 2 leaflet, the *RTW* criticizes those who "mostly share Toussaint's affection for the Democratic Party of workers' enemies." But when it counts, *RTW* buries its paper opposition to the Democrats, as it did in an April 17 election campaign leaflet for the TWU International Convention. In their candidates' "immediate demands" and proposals there was not a word against the Democrats. The *RTW*'s real program is to cover for and try to push the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy into more militant action. Echoing Toussaint, for whom they hustled votes in 1999, the *RTW* titles their latest leaflet "Defend Our Wage Increase!" which inflates the sorry "award" and reinforces illusions in arbitration. It concludes by beseeching, "Keep the pressure on, force the Toussaint crew forward—or out!" Such fake socialists are obstacles to raising workers consciousness and forging a class-struggle leadership of the unions.

It is an indictment of the current TWU leadership that many transit workers—after proving their militancy and desire for struggle during the December 2005 strike—have drawn the wrong lessons from that strike and its aftermath. Left hanging by the sellout TWU and AFL-CIO tops, many embittered workers falsely equate the union with the sellout pro-capitalist bureaucracy. A class-struggle leadership would educate and mobilize transit workers and the rest of NYC labor on a totally different program. For example, the TWU should resurrect its historic call for free mass transit, cutting against the bosses' campaigns to pit workers against the riding public. The unions should fight for free, quality medical care for all; for full citizenship rights for immigrants; and against racist cop terror in the ghettos and barrios. The Taylor Law can be defeated, but that requires joint labor action with the other key city unions, such as teachers, sanitation and hospital workers unions. At a real TWU mass meeting—not just a pep rally for the bureaucracy—transit workers would be able to speak, debate and decide on a strategy to stop the MTA's union-busting attacks.

The struggle to forge a class-struggle leadership in the unions goes hand in hand with building a multiracial workers party that fights for a workers government. As long as capitalism exists, the working class and all the oppressed can only hope to survive from one economic crisis, one bloody war, one racist clampdown to the next. The Spartacist League is dedicated to building a revolutionary workers party that can lead us out of this morass and toward a socialist future for all mankind.■

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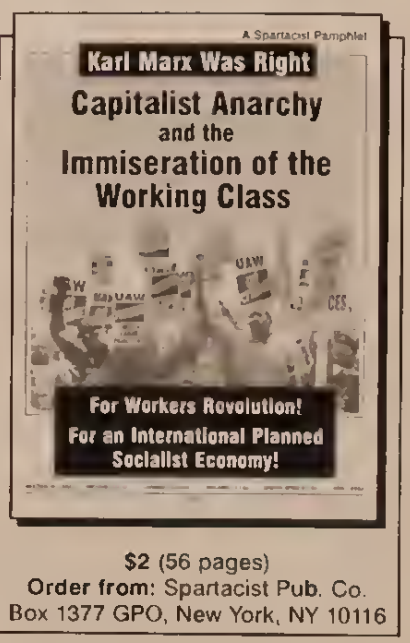

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Stop Vendetta Against Roman Polanski!

Free Him Now! No Extradition!

AFP

Roman Polanski at closing ceremony of 2008 Cannes Film Festival.

Suddenly reviving its 32-year-old vendetta against world-renowned film director Roman Polanski, the Los Angeles County district attorney's office, backed by the Feds, orchestrated his arrest in Zurich on September 26. The 76-year-old Polanski, now in Swiss custody, awaits possible extradition to the U.S. to be sentenced for having had *consensual* sex with a precocious 13-year-old one day back in 1977.

Roman Polanski committed no crime. Facing a Hollywood show trial with multiple felony charges hanging over him, he pled guilty to "unlawful sexual intercourse" with a minor. Threatened with more prison time after having already served six weeks in state prison for "diagnostic testing," Polanski, a French citizen, fled to Paris in 1978 to escape the puritan witchhunt. Despite the standing threat of extradition, Polanski has persevered in the face of the American judicial *fatwa* and managed to pursue his film career in Europe with artistic success, until now.

Many are asking the obvious question about Polanski's sudden arrest: ***why now?*** The events occurred over three decades ago, Polanski is in his 70s and there is no "victim" to avenge. The woman involved, Samantha Geimer, now in her 40s with three children, has long opposed the continued prosecution of Polanski. And, until recently, the U.S. has not really turned the screws trying to extradite him.

But, as noted by author Robert Harris in a 30 September op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, that changed after the release of the 2008 documentary, *Roman Polanski: Wanted and Desired*. The documentary includes an interview with David Wells, who brags how he, as a then-deputy district attorney, coached Judge Laurence Rittenband (now deceased) on the case, in particular to ensure prison time for Polanski. Based on the film and other evidence, Polanski's attorneys filed a motion to dismiss the case, which was denied in February by Los Angeles

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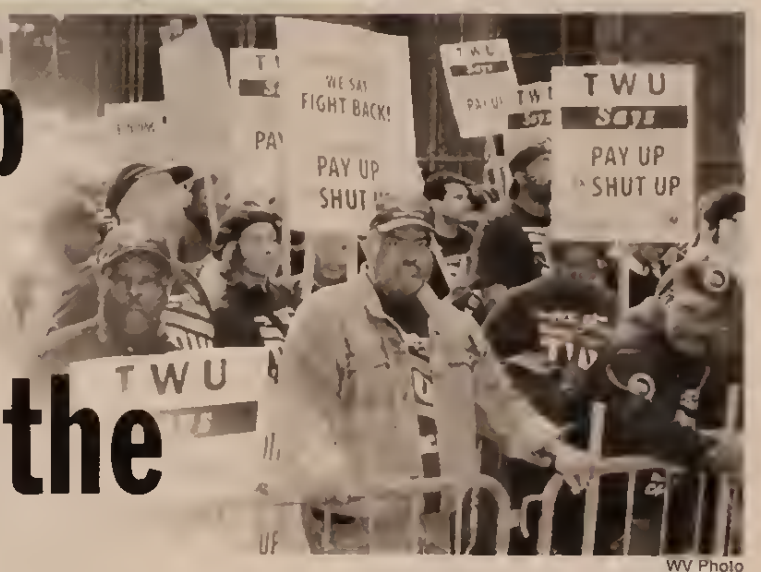
Bosses' Rules: A Losing Game

MTA Moves to Scrap Arbitration Ruling, Transit Workers Seethe



WV Photo

Transit workers protest at MTA headquarters, September 29.

New York City

The following article was issued as a leaflet by the New York Spartacist League on September 28. It was distributed at a mass rally of transit workers the following day.

On September 8, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) filed papers in New York Supreme Court to scrap a contract imposed by an arbitration board a few weeks earlier on some 35,000 members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100. According to the MTA bosses, billionaire mayor Mike Bloomberg and the capitalist gutter press, transit workers don't deserve the paltry wage hikes and minuscule reduction in health care costs included in the pact. With this 2009-2012 contract and their livelihoods in limbo, transit workers are seething, angry not only with the greedy MTA brass and the arrogant mayor but also with their own union misleaders. Since the transit workers' powerful December 2005 strike, which was cut short and sold out, this is the second contract imposed through arbitration under the machinery of New York's slave-labor Taylor Law. The lessons are clear: arbitration is a trap and playing by the bosses' rules is a losing game.

The MTA and Bloomberg's latest attack on TWU Local 100 is further "payback" for the 2005 strike. But it's also part of a broader bipartisan assault on the living standards of the entire working class, from the Obama administration's "bailout" of the Big Three automakers that gutted United Auto Workers jobs and contracts to anti-union cutbacks imposed by state governments. This offensive is being carried out to make working people pay for Wall Street's sinking portfolios and capitalism's deep economic crisis.

Break with the Democrats!
For a Fighting Workers Party!

The new arbitration deal is hardly the "great train robbery" decried by the bosses, but neither is it the "good contract for tough times" as claimed by the Local 100 bureaucracy led by President Roger Toussaint. The contract is supposed to cap the 1.5 percent "health care tax"—the most hated concession agreed to by Toussaint during the 2005 transit strike—at 1.5 percent on a 40-hour workweek. It also calls for an 11 percent wage hike over three years (an amount that the arbitration panel chairman determined that the MTA can easily afford).

But workers are incensed that these wage increases would begin in April instead of January when the contract expired and are staggered in a way that saves the MTA tens of millions of dollars. What's more, the MTA court challenge could delay the wage increase for up to a year, amounting to a wage freeze. The deal also creates a poorly paid "handyman" job title, Station Maintainer Helper, that attacks hard-won work and safety rules ("broadbanding") and threatens the jobs of skilled trades workers. On the plus side, if the pact is ever implemented, several thousand "MTA Bus" division workers are supposed to finally get a near-parity contract with the rest of the bus and subway workforce. These former private bus line workers have been working without a contract since before the 2005 strike (!) and still have substandard pension benefits. There should be equal pay for equal work!

Even before the arbitration ruling was announced, it provoked howls of outrage from City Hall and elsewhere. In a 24 July op-ed piece in the *Daily News*, former MTA chief Peter Kalikow attacked the 1.5 percent cap on health care contributions and claimed that transit workers enjoy the "kinds of lavish benefits that caused General Motors and Chrysler to go bankrupt"! This is pretty rich, coming from a multimillionaire real estate baron

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WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 945 | GCU C-701 | 23 October 2009

Break with the Democrats—For a Workers Party!

U.S. Capitalism in Decay

AP photos

Left: Unemployed gather outside of Cleveland City Hall to apply for jobs. Right: Job fair in Louisville, Kentucky. Periodic capitalist crises mean immiseration for working people.

America Needs Workers Revolution

We print below, edited for publication, a September 12 forum given in Chicago by Spartacist League Central Committee member Ed Clarkson.

Let's start with the obvious: things are bad. Official unemployment is about 15 million. Nine million people are working part-time. Another several million or more have thrown in the towel; they're not reflected in the unemployment statistics because they don't look for work anymore, and probably haven't since the dot-com crisis. We see people losing their homes and dreams of retirement smashed.

News was just released that only 60 percent of the people attending college ever complete their four-year degree. People drop out, I assume, because they don't have the scratch. And generally those who are applying for college are downsizing to the community colleges, which are kind of like trade schools. Typically you go through community college, get a skill and go look for a job. But there are no jobs, and you go back to community college and get another skill, and so on. Everybody knows that phenomenon. The reason being education doesn't produce jobs; capitalist economic investment produces jobs. Also, with the continuing loss of jobs, you have a continuing loss of health care.

Last November about 56 percent of the voting-age populace turned out, many hoping to end the seeming *Nightmare on Elm Street* of the Cheney-Bush years. Democratic voters all had considerable illusions in Barack Obama, the first black man elected to the presidency. Now, it's not his 100th day, it's his 200th day or so. It's not that nothing has happened since he took office; it's unfortunately worse than that. Two of the major actions of his administration are, first, giving a lot of bread to the banks, which has the population outraged. And the other, with the able assistance of United Auto Workers head Gettelfinger, is bringing what was at one time the most powerful union in the United States to its knees. That auto bailout deal was orchestrated from the White House. All the promises that he made as a candidate, or half promises, that plants wouldn't close—the plants closed. Jobs vanished—they're not even spoken about anymore with any seriousness.

Mortgage relief is not forthcoming at all. People are still losing their homes; they're going to continue to lose their homes. Roundups of immigrants have in fact escalated greatly compared with the Bush years. The occupation of Iraq continues, the "timetable" for partial withdrawal being essentially the one that George Bush proposed, no different, and who knows what the timetable means in any case. Anybody who thinks that there will actually be a departure in 2010 better think about it again. There's the escalation of war in Afghanistan, which most Americans today are not very happy with. And then there is the torture apparatus of U.S. imperialism: the government won't brag about it anymore, just tuck it back in a corner. Unlike Cheney, they won't cheer every time somebody screams in a prison —that's unseemly.

Wealth Care

Look at the current health care "reform." There are now approaching 50 million people in this country without any health care at all. There is some impulse on the part of the bourgeoisie to cover a larger percentage of the population, because it's bad press to have so many people without health care. Of even greater concern for the bourgeoisie, health care in America is not cost-effective. Remembering that this is the most savage and backward of the major imperialist powers, and always has been, health care "reform" is gone about in a particularly American way. The "evil" cited is that people are "consuming" too much health care. Just like they consumed too many homes, when banks gave them the loans, and they ran up too much debt just trying to get by because their incomes were really shrinking.

So the evil consumer is behind everything. What's happened, they found out, is that a significant percentage of credit card debt was for health costs. People don't "consume" health care: "Oh, doc, I'm looking for a bypass, and what are you charging for liver transplants today?" What happens is that you go into a doctor's office because you don't feel well, he tells you what you need, your insurance either approves it or doesn't, and the hospital provides it or doesn't. There is no consumerism here. Everything is out of your hands.

So what are they putting together in Washington now? Obama has already made deals with the insurance companies, with the doctors, with the hospitals, that certain areas won't be touched, so they are all now supporters of health care "reform." All these people who have made mammoth profits are now all of a sudden behind this because they may get some tens of millions more people able to "consume." On the other hand, ordinary people get nervous when they hear that there will be all these great cost savings, because the fox is now running the

continued on page 6

Baran/MPR

September 11: Minneapolis cops arrested seven supporters of Rosemary Williams, who had been resisting eviction from her foreclosed home.

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Drop All Charges Against Elliot Madison and Michael Wallschlaeger!

The first day of the G20 summit last month saw the use of a "sound cannon" that emitted a directed high-decibel ear-splitting noise with terrifying effect. This weapon is used widely by U.S. occupation forces in Iraq and Afghanistan for "crowd control." And now, it is being deployed by U.S. police departments for use against protesters. Knowing that other law enforcement agencies were watching this new weapon being demonstrated, the Pittsburgh police chief boasted, "It served its purpose well." With the business district locked down, up to a thousand jail cells freed up for use and protesters placed well outside the G20 security perimeter, the cops opened fire with tear gas, stun grenades and rifle-fired bean bags on assembled youth with no march permits. What followed was a violent cat-and-mouse chase of a marauding police army in pursuit of a few hundred fleeing youth.

"If you have 5,000 police officers and a quarter-million dollars in fancy equipment, you have to do something with it," explained Witold Walczak, legal director of the Pennsylvania American Civil Liberties Union. "Might as well go after some amateur ham radio operators in a motel room." The amateur ham radio operators in question here are Elliot Madison and Michael Wallschlaeger, New York anarchists arrested on September 24 after a police raid on their motel room in Pittsburgh. The police found the two sitting in front of computers, wearing headphones, perusing maps and listening to scanners for the purpose of tweeting anti-G20 protesters using the Internet social-networking site Twitter.

Twitter, in cooperation with cops, shut down the anarchists' account, posting a notice that it "has been suspended due to strange activity." This "strange activity," according to the Pennsylvania criminal complaint, consisted of the two "directing others, specifically protesters of the G-20 summit, in order to avoid apprehension after a lawful order to disperse." A typical tweet would have been: "Report received that police are 'nabbing' anyone that looks like a protester/Black Bloc. Stay alert watch your friends!" There can be no doubt that many demonstrators on this first day of G20 protests were saved from police injury and arrest by Madison and Wallschlaeger's warnings. For this, the Pennsylvania prosecutors are now charging Madison and Wallschlaeger with "hindering prosecution, criminal use of communication facility and possessing criminal instruments."

On October 1 Madison's Queens, New York, home—an anarchist collective house known as Tortuga—was raided in search of "evidence" of violation of "federal rioting laws." FBI and New York City police searched the home for *16 hours*, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., handcuffing several residents for hours. Madison, a social worker, had his confidential client list seized by federal agents. Other seized "evidence" included Curious George plush toys, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* DVDs, artwork, correspondence with political prisoners, birth certificates, passports, videos, tax records, photographs, banners, posters, flags and a needlepoint of Lenin!

Although no federal charges have been filed yet, Madison and his wife, Elena, are now under investigation on trumped-up charges of violating an interstate rioting law. Passed in 1968, that law is known as the "H. Rap Brown law" because it was intended to target black militants and leftist activists. As the Madisons' attorney pointed out, this law has been rarely used since the case of the Chicago Seven, who were arrested during the 1968 Democratic National Convention protests in Chicago.

Under the Obama administration, the "war on terror"—exemplified abroad by the continuing slaughter in Iraq and Afghanistan and the U.S. air strikes in Pakistan—continues to have a domestic reflection of furious repression of all kinds of dissent, including on an expanded electronic battlefield. While the U.S. government applauds the use of Twitter, Facebook and other social-networking sites by protesters in countries like Iran, such protesters in the U.S. are met with criminal charges.

Democracy Now!

In the case of the Madisons and Wallschlaeger, they are being gone after for distributing *publicly available information*. Their case is reminiscent of that of Sherman Austin, a black L.A. anarchist who was convicted in 2003 under a 1997 "anti-terrorism" law for hosting an anarchist Web site on which publicly available information was posted (see "Free Sherman Austin Now!" *WV* No. 809, 12 September 2003).

It is in the interest of the working class and all opponents of government repression to fight back against the capitalists' assault on democratic rights, such as the encroachment on Internet use. *Drop all charges against Elliot Madison and Michael Wallschlaeger now!* ■

In Defense of Dialectical Materialism

TROTSKY

LENIN

This year marks the centennial anniversary of the publication of Materialism and Empirio-criticism, *written by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin in 1908 during the period of victorious reaction following the defeat of the 1905 Russian Revolution. This work is a powerful repudiation of bourgeois philosophical idealism—embraced at the time even by some Bolshevik leaders—which in the end always amounts to a defense of reaction and the status quo. In the excerpt below, Lenin provides a concise exposition of the Marxist materialist outlook.*

Yesterday we did not know that coal tar contains alizarin. Today we have learned that it does. The question is, did coal tar contain alizarin yesterday?

Of course it did. To doubt it would be to make a mockery of modern science.

And if that is so, three important epistemological conclusions follow:

1) Things exist independently of our consciousness, independently of our sensations, outside of us, for it is beyond doubt that alizarin existed in coal tar yesterday and it is equally beyond doubt that yesterday we knew nothing of the existence of this alizarin and received no sensations from it.

2) There is definitely no difference in principle between the phenomenon and the thing-in-itself, and there cannot be any such difference. The only difference is between what is known and what is not yet known....

3) In the theory of knowledge, as in every other sphere of science, we must think dialectically, that is, we must not regard our knowledge as ready-made and unalterable, but must determine how *knowledge* emerges from *ignorance*, how incomplete, inexact knowledge becomes more complete and more exact.

Once we accept the point of view that human knowledge develops from ignorance, we shall find millions of examples of it just as simple as the discovery of alizarin in coal tar, millions of observations not only in the history of science and technology but in the everyday life of each and every one of us that illustrate the transformation of "things-in-themselves" into "things-for-us," the appearance of "phenomena" when our sense-organs experience an impact from external objects, the disappearance of "phenomena" when some obstacle prevents the action upon our sense-organs of an object which we know to exist. The sole and unavoidable deduction to be made from this—a deduction which all of us make in everyday practice and which materialism deliberately places at the foundation of its epistemology—is that outside us, and independently of us, there exist objects, things, bodies and that our perceptions are images of the external world.

—V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* (1909)

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Antiwar Reformists, Labor Bureaucrats and the Democratic Party

The Syphilitic Chain

Credits (left to right): Socialist Action, Alameda Report, AP

Left to right: Socialist Action's Jeff Mackler, Tim Paulson of the San Francisco Labor Council and Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

We reprint below a leaflet issued by the Bay Area Spartacist League on October 14 and distributed at the October 17 Antiwar Coalition's rally.

Socialist Action leader Jeff Mackler has been caught red-handed at a game he has long been playing in his self-described role as "a national antiwar leader for the past 45 years." That is, his service as a running dog for the trade-union bureaucracy and, behind it, the often-preferred party of imperialist war in the U.S., the Democrats. An article by quirky rad-lib journalist Alexander Cockburn (*CounterPunch*, 4-6 September) exposes Mackler, in his capacity as a leader of the October 17 Antiwar Coalition, as the moving force in canceling an antiwar picket against Democratic Party House Speaker Nancy Pelosi at a $100-a-plate breakfast in a ritzy hotel in San Francisco on Labor Day weekend.

Cockburn recounts Mackler's apoplexy when he learned that this protest, which the October 17 Coalition had voted to endorse, was taking place at an event hosted by the San Francisco Labor Council. In an e-mail to his fellow coalition leaders, Mackler raved: "No one knew that we voted to hold a demonstration at the Labor Council breakfast!" (Evidently they had been hoodwinked by Steve Zeltzer, a perennial gadfly in the Bay Area liberal-reformist swamp, who put forward the motion.) Declaring that a "time bomb was ticking," Mackler argued that this was a "grave mistake that needed immediate correction" or else the coalition would lose "the ability to ask in good faith for Labor Council support" for their October 17 antiwar protest in San Francisco.

According to Mackler, his umbrage at not being informed that Pelosi was being hosted by the trade-union tops was shared by others in the coalition, including the Revolutionary Communist Party's World Can't Wait front group, Workers World's International Action Center and United for Peace and Justice. But the day was saved for these antiwar reformists, not to mention Pelosi and her labor statesmen hosts. Labor Council chief Tim Paulson wrote: "Our partners in the anti-war movement have been calling me to say they are condemning this protest as irresponsible and divisive." Paulson particularly pointed to the Party for Socialism and Liberation's ANSWER coalition as well as U.S. Labor Against the War. Having more of an inside track into the whole affair is Socialist Organizer, which has endorsed the October 17 demonstration and whose leader Alan Benjamin serves on the executive committee of the Labor Council.

In response to Cockburn, a lengthy article in *Socialist Action* (October 2009) is headlined: "Red-baiting against Socialist Action & the antiwar movement—Mackler replies to Cockburn's smears." Far from red-baiting, Cockburn's article in fact makes the opposite charge, i.e., that Mackler and his fellow "antiwar" leaders have about as much to do with revolutionary politics as HMOs have to do with health care (or, as Cockburn puts it, these recent antics only demonstrate that Mackler is "longer of tooth, but no closer to socialism"). Indeed, here in the very small petri dish of the October 17 Coalition, we see the role the reformist left plays in the syphilitic chain that has shackled the working class—the one force in this society with the social power and historic interest to wage a genuine struggle against the barbaric wars and occupations of U.S. imperialism—to the capitalist class enemy. The reformists serve the labor bureaucrats who in turn serve to subordinate the unions to the parties of imperialist war, particularly the Democrats.

Voltaire on the Syphilitic Chain

Pangloss replied thus: "My dear Candide! You remember Paquette, the pretty lady's maid to our august Baroness: well, in her arms I tasted the delights of paradise, which in turn provoked the torments of hell by which you see me devoured; she was herself infected, and may now be dead. Paquette received this present from a very learned Franciscan, who could trace it back to its source: for he had been given it by an old countess, who in turn had it from a cavalry captain, who was indebted for it to a marquise, who caught it from a page-boy, who contracted it from a Jesuit, who, while a novice, had inherited it in a direct line from one of the shipmates of Christopher Columbus. As for me, I will pass it on to no one, for I am dying of it."

"Oh Pangloss!" cried Candide, "what a strange genealogy is this! Surely the devil is its source?"—"Not in the least," replied that great man. "It is an indispensable feature of the best of all possible worlds, a necessary ingredient: for if Columbus, on an island off the Americas, had not contracted this disease—which poisons the source of all procreation, and often even prevents procreation, contrary though this be to nature's great plan—we would have neither chocolate nor cochineal...."

—from *Candide* (1759)

Others do the same under the cover of more "revolutionary" rhetoric. Take the Internationalist Group (IG), for example. They promote the May Day 2008 antiwar port shutdown by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) as opposed to the opportunists' "program of chaining the working class and antiwar activists to the Democrats." The May Day action, which shut down ports up and down the West Coast, *was* a powerful demonstration of the kind of working-class action that is needed against the imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. But it was politically undermined by the ILWU bureaucracy. Seeing the opportunity to make a statement of the union's strength in the midst of the 2008 contract negotiations, the ILWU tops simultaneously channeled the anger of the ranks against the Iraq war and desire to defend their union into "national unity" patriotism and support for Obama for Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism.

The IG claims this was all the doing of the ILWU International tops as opposed to their man in the bureaucracy, left-talking ILWU Local 10 Exec Board member Jack Heyman, who authored the motion calling for the port shutdown. Heyman in turn decries our statement that the protest was "against the occupation of Iraq (but not Afghanistan, the preferred war of the Democrats)" as an outrageous falsehood. In fact, the length of the efforts to deep-six any mention of Afghanistan, not to mention Pelosi, was confirmed by antiwar activist Cindy Sheehan, who was a featured speaker at the SF May Day rally held in conjunction with the port shutdown. Sheehan, who at the time was running as an independent against Pelosi, told *Workers Vanguard* that Clarence Thomas, who was then an ILWU Local 10 Exec Board member (and Heyman's co-emcee at the rally), "really shocked me and said that I couldn't say anything bad about Nancy Pelosi or talk about Afghanistan; I was supposed to stay focused only on Iraq"!

This attempted censorship wasn't perpetrated by the ILWU International tops but by one of the "progressives" of the Local 10 bureaucracy. Indeed, the very purpose of double-talkers like Thomas and Heyman is to give a "militant" gloss to the class-collaborationist treachery of the ILWU bureaucracy, of which they are an integral part. Here the IG covered for Heyman who covered for the ILWU International, whose "loyal to America" patriotism on May Day was designed to boost the Democratic Party, which, now in power, is intensifying U.S. imperialism's assault on the peoples of Afghanistan, expanding it to Pakistan and waving its sabers against Iran.

A Long and Sordid History

Breathing a sigh of relief that the October 17 Coalition had managed to remove its "good name" from the protest against Pelosi, Mackler sanctimoniously intoned that labor support was particularly critical "in these days of terrible encroachments on the lives, health and stability of working people, not to mention the masses who are daily slaughtered in the course of the U.S. wars that we so strongly oppose." Cockburn aptly replied: "Opposition to the war and the slaughter of the masses apparently stops and flees at the hideous possibility of causing embarrassment to the San Francisco Labor Council." But then again, Cockburn himself knows a thing or two about fleeing from opposition to war. In the lead-up

continued on page 10

WV photo

Cameron/Oakland Tribune

Clarence Thomas (far left) and Jack Heyman at 2008 San Francisco May Day rally. Cindy Sheehan (right), shown speaking at the rally, recounted to *WV* that Thomas, then an ILWU Exec Board member, told her that she "couldn't say anything bad about Nancy Pelosi or talk about Afghanistan."

The Decline of New Orleans

We print below, slightly edited for publication, an 8 August document by Joe Vetter, a founding member of the Spartacist League/U.S. and the organizer of the SL's former New Orleans branch. For many years, from our Atlanta branch, he directed our work in the South.

By Joe Vetter

A great crime was committed against the black and working population of this country by the predictable depopulation of New Orleans around Hurricane Katrina. But while Katrina represented an opportunity for the bourgeoisie, it did not represent the turning point for the population. The turning point for the city occurred in the early 1970s, as is detailed below.

The Port of New Orleans was primarily an outlet for cotton. The Cotton Exchange closed in 1964. This marked a shift by city planners to tourism. In the late 1960s Bourbon Street, Royal Street and the area around Jackson Square in the French Quarter were closed to vehicle traffic. Decatur Street, which had previously been a home to very rough seamen's bars, was "cleaned up." The Jax brewery, which was located across the street from Jackson Square, was closed and converted into an upscale tourist shopping center. Plans were laid for building the Louisiana Superdome, and Poydras Street, which was anchored by the Superdome at one end, was widened—driving out the drunks, low-life bars, and boxing gyms. This made room for some swank hotels and One Shell Square, which was the second-largest Shell Oil tower in the U.S.

Meanwhile, an attempt to keep the port alive as a transport center was being made with the completion of MRGO (Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet), then called the Ships Channel. For over a century, the port had been plagued by its location—about 100 miles upriver from the Gulf of Mexico. Additionally, the water along this distance was somewhat shallow, with shifting sandbar bottoms. Probably from at least the Civil War on, there existed a union of a few dozen men called the River Pilots whose job was to join ships at the mouth of the river and guide them safely to New Orleans or further north. These were highly skilled jobs that paid extremely well, and you had to be grandfathered into the union. The Ships Channel was supposed to shorten the route to New Orleans and avoid the need for the River Pilots. It also provided a quick outlet for the first stage of the NASA "moon rocket" from the Michoud Assembly Facility to get to the Gulf and on to Florida. Prior to Katrina, the facility was being used to install the heat tiles that keep falling off of the space shuttle. The Ships Channel was the route taken by the waters that flooded the Ninth Ward and New Orleans East.

Plans were made to open a large container facility at France Road at the corner of the Ships Channel and the Industrial Canal in the Lower Ninth Ward. The Industrial Canal cuts the Ninth Ward into its upper and lower parts. The question for the shipping bosses was how to deal with the labor question for the port. New Orleans at that time also had large rail yards and a number of scattered trucking facilities. There were two unions contending for organization of the facility, the Teamsters and the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA).

If memory serves correctly, the Teamsters were loyal to the Reutherites, and I believe they had connections to the Carlos Marcello Mafia family. This was in opposition to the Baton Rouge Teamsters, who ran some militant strikes but were led by one of the main people to testify against Hoffa before Congress. The port bosses wanted to (and eventually did) sign a sweetheart contract with the New Orleans Teamsters to organize the container facility.

The history of New Orleans labor centers on the port. Longshoremen were organized into about five locals, both along race lines and along skill lines: general cargo (black, with a smaller white local), banana handlers (black, I believe, and dangerous because of tarantulas), grain handlers (mainly black and dangerous because of the possibility of falling into the grain and smothering) and clerks and checkers (white only). The multiple locals became one in the 1980s.

The International Longshoremen's Association organized the port in the late 1930s after a bitter battle with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). This battle included Catholic church cells organized by Catholic Action that came down on the side of the ILA (see F. Ray Marshall, *Labor in the South* [1967]). John L. Lewis, president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), had decreed that the ILA organize everything east of the Mississippi and the ILWU organize everything west of the Mississippi. New Orleans straddles the river. I was told that in the 1930s the Communist Party's (CP) largest chapter was in Birmingham, but its second-largest chapter was in New Orleans. An ex-CP organizer told me once that they would regularly sell the *Worker* on the levees. There had been arguments in the CP in the late 1920s about an orientation to black dock workers in New Orleans versus sharecroppers in Alabama (see Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* [2008]).

In the 1950s and 1960s, being a black longshoreman meant that you were somebody. Everyone made good money, and every political and social event in the black community took place at the union hall. And the union led the labor movement. In 1968, when the black longshore locals downed tools to commemorate the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., white longshore workers also downed tools saying, "We don't work without our black brothers." Black longshore workers generally favored maintaining racially separate locals because they believed that without them they would be giving up their power. The work environment was integrated even during the harder aspects of Jim Crow segregation. I happened to see an MGM travelogue on New Orleans made about 1950. It opens with scenes of the port and longshoremen working. It showed longshoremen, both black and white, loading cotton and emphasized the role of the port. Almost no mention is made of the food, culture and music. Another scene of longshoremen working at the time can be found in the Richard Widmark film *Panic in the Streets* (1950). There are also scenes of seamen bidding for jobs in what I believe was the old National Maritime Union hall.

In order to allow the sweetheart contract to be signed with the Teamsters over the France Road container facility, the port bosses had to give up something to the dock workers. Containerization was seen by the ILA as representing a massive loss of work, particularly in general cargo. What was accepted was the idea of "royalty payments." This meant that longshoremen would be paid for just signing in for work (without actually working). In other words, they sold their jobs and power. This set the stage for the disconnection of the main body of the black population from all except the most marginalized sections of the working class. After one particularly terrible murder, a local resident was interviewed on TV and she made the obvious point: "Somebody around here has got to give these young people something to do." I believe that the bulk of the black proletariat in New Orleans is now changing sheets in tourist hotels. I recall having an argument with a comrade, well before Katrina, over the fact that poverty in New Orleans was more comparable to the Caribbean than the South Bronx.

Longshore power is very attenuated; it was once the center of labor and black power in New Orleans. In the late 1980s, we distributed the longshore supplement at a number of East Coast ports [see "Let's Win This One!" reprinted in *WV* No. 413, 10 October 1986]. We received a good reception at every port that we went to but New Orleans. There it was difficult to give the supplement away to longshoremen. One told me, "I don't need that, I'm just going in here to punch the clock." The longshore workforce is aging and its power has diminished. There was a report of a surge in cargo in 1997, but the question is whether this reinvigorated the ILA or went to the France Road facility, or whether it went 30 miles upriver to be unloaded (where it would be considered part of the Port of New Orleans).

Most of the statistics quoted in *Workers Vanguard* regarding the size of the port undoubtedly included the France Road facility and areas upriver from New Orleans that are worked by New Orleans longshoremen. The France Road facility, I believe, remains closed since Katrina. Also, *WV* No. 868 (14 April 2006) states that in terms of tonnage, the Port of New Orleans is the fifth-largest in the world. The Port Authority states that it is the twelfth-largest port in the U.S.

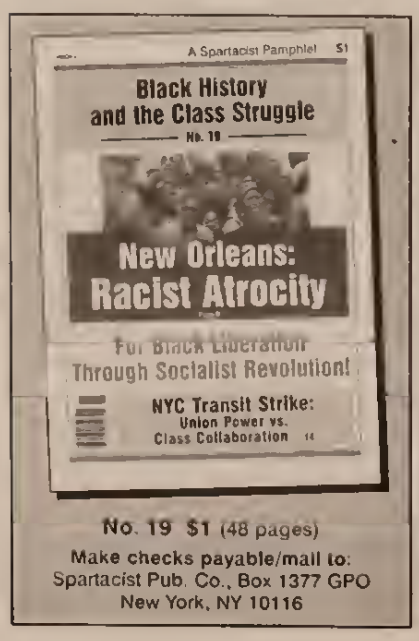
Beginning in the mid 1980s and continuing to 1996, I made essentially annual trips to New Orleans to visit family and vacation (not the same thing). It is easy to see most of the Port of New Orleans by going about one-half block behind Café du Monde (a major tourist attraction) and looking. The top of the crescent of the Mississippi at New Orleans is just about at this point. In all of the years that I visited, the only thing that moved on the port was the water on the river and the ferry that plods across the river to the west bank of New Orleans.

I believe that fitting into this picture is the fact that beginning in the early 1970s there was massive white flight from New Orleans to the suburbs. Housing and social life had been very mildly integrated at least from during the 1950s. A black mayor was elected, and the largely black transit workers won a

continued on page 8

UPI

New Orleans: International Longshoremen's Association member during 1968 strike.



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Louisiana Photograph Collection

Trading floor of New Orleans Cotton Exchange, 1924. The exchange was closed in 1964.

Jim Crow "Justice" for Victim of Racist Attack

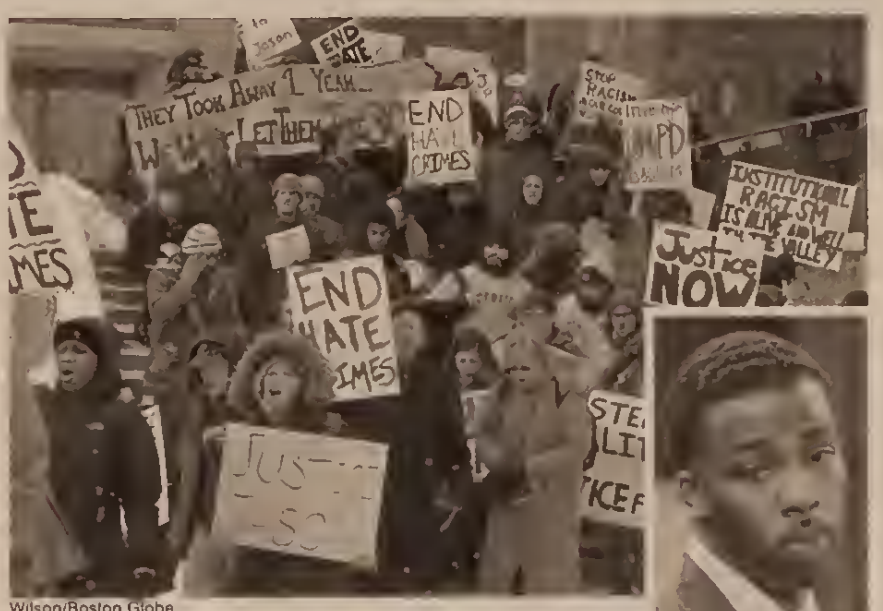
Drop the Charges Against Jason Vassell!

Early in the morning of 3 February 2008, Jason Vassell, then a student at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, was thrust into every black man's nightmare. Two drunken bigots approached his dorm room window shouting racist slurs and sexual innuendo about two (white) female friends inside. When Vassell refused to go outside to confront them, they broke through his window. Then, when he left to get help, they entered his dormitory lobby and attacked him, breaking his nose and giving him a concussion.

Amherst, Mass.

Managing to fend them off with his pocketknife, he fled behind a locked door. Later that day when he went to press charges, Vassell was arrested within one minute of setting foot inside the police station—for the "crime" of defending himself.

Outrageously, Vassell faces two felony counts of assault, with a potential sentence of 30 years! Both of the racist thugs who attacked him had extensive criminal records for similar incidents, yet one was sentenced only to probation, while the other wasn't charged at all. The District Attorney's continuing persecution of Jason Vassell recalls the infamous 1857 Dred Scott decision in which the Supreme Court held that blacks "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect." Vassell's lawyers are pursuing a civil rights case, fighting to get the charges dropped on the basis that he has been selectively prosecuted because of his race. Students and community members have rallied to Vassell's defense, organizing protests and showing up to his hearings. *Drop the charges against Joson Vossell!*



Wilson/Boston Globe

Stern/Republican

UMass Amherst, February 3: March in support of Jason Vassell (inset).

To add insult to injury, the university sided with the racist police and presented Vassell with an ultimatum: withdraw, or face expulsion. *Let Jason Vossell return to his studies!* The persecution of Jason Vassell shows that even at supposedly "progressive" campuses in "progressive" states, racist violence, repression and injustice against black people are inherent in capitalist America. Under capitalism, the universities are run to benefit the bosses and reinforce the norms of racist, capitalist society. *Abolish the odministration! For student/teacher/worker control of the universities!*

American capitalism was founded on black chattel slavery and black people today constitute an oppressed race-color caste, segregated at the bottom of society. But black people are not just victims of racist capitalism. Black workers are integrated at the point of production and compose a key section of the proletariat. The only way to achieve full equality and integration is through the fight to overturn the entire rotten capitalist edifice. Class-conscious black workers, armed with a revolutionary program, will play a central role in building the workers party necessary to sweep away the capitalist system of exploitation and racial oppression.

* * *

Send protest letters demanding the dropping of charges against Jason Vassell to: Elizabeth Scheibel, Northwestern District Attorney, One Gleason Plaza, Northampton, MA 01060 and to Martha Coakley, Massachusetts Attorney General, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108. The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League, has contributed to Jason Vassell's legal defense and encourages others to do so. Checks should be made out to his mother, Esmie James, and mailed to Justice for Jason, P.O. Box 197, Amherst, MA 01004. ■

LRP State Department Socialists Embrace New Bedfellow

From the Big Bang to Hot Air

On August 18 the vicarious Third World nationalists in the League for the Revolutionary Party (LRP) sponsored a forum by a former member of our organization, Israeli pseudo-Marxist Yossi Schwartz, under the title "All Israel Is Occupied Territory! The Crisis of Zionism and the Prospects for Revolution in the Middle East: For a Palestinian Workers' State from the River to the Sea! For a Socialist Federation of the Middle East!" We went to investigate these self-styled socialists' new lash-up, the latest in a long series for both parties.

The LRP's previous international affiliates include a Ukrainian section made up of con men who posed as members of (according to the LRP) "at least ten far left organizations internationally, and probably far more"—including the Bolshevik Tendency (BT), the Internationalist Group and the Committee for a Workers' International, represented in the U.S. by Socialist Alternative. When the fraud came out, the LRP had to admit that their Ukrainian section "has in fact never existed as a genuine organization. Its 'members' and 'leaders,' some of whom we had met more than once, were part of the overall scam" ("LRP/COFI Statement on the Ukrainian 'RWO'," undated). As we noted, all these organizations had been "more than happy to perpetrate their con on the left public by trumpeting their fraudulent Ukrainian sections" for as long as they could ("Chickens Come Home to Roost in Kiev," *WV* No. 808, 29 August 2003).

Today, as the Internationalist Socialist League (Israel/Occupied Palestine), Yossi Schwartz is arguing the LRP's line on everything from the Palestinian question to "statified capitalism." ("Statified capitalism" is the LRP's contribution to the state capitalist "theory" used by renegades from Marxism to justify siding with the U.S. imperialists against the former Soviet Union.) But Schwartz has been known to argue for almost anything, including mental telepathy. As a comrade from the Spartacus Youth Club pointed out at the forum, "Yossi is known for changing his political positions and his groups about as often as he changes his socks. Where he will he next is anybody's guess—probably even for Yossi himself. Too bad telepathy can't tell him that."

The SYC comrade explained, "As he left our organization 15 years ago, Yossi was denouncing us as 'Stalinophobic' for refusing to support the ex-Stalinist, anti-Semitic and fascist-infested 'red-brown coalition' in the [former] Soviet Union as some form of defender against capitalist counterrevolution. After quitting, he then joined a number of groups that cheerled the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union, and turned around and denounced us as being Stalinophilic." In response, Schwartz heatedly denied ever having called for an "orientation" to the "red-brown coalition." But this was one of the positions that formed the basis of his faction in our organization, together with retrospectively saluting Khomeini's mullahs as the "ally" of the workers in Iran in 1979 and bizarrely opposing the Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe (see "The Rad Shift," *Spartacist Canada* No. 102, March/April 1995). Yossi's course was fully documented by our Canadian comrades in two *Internal Discussion Bulletins* that contain some 400 pages of factional debate ("Debates with the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction" Nos. 12 and 13, May and June 1994), available upon request.

Schwartz Drives Self into Sea?

More recently, Schwartz had hooked up with the late Ted Grant's International Marxist Tendency (Socialist Appeal is their affiliate in the U.S.). At the forum, Schwartz explained that he and a co-thinker split because the Grantites refused to "militarily" support Islamic fundamentalist Hamas against petty-bourgeois nationalist Fatah during Hamas's 2007 takeover of Gaza, internecine bloodletting in which Marxists had no side. A comrade from the Spartacist League responded:

> "You said it took the Grantites to tell you that you couldn't support Hamas 'militarily' for you to figure out that they were opportunist. That blew me away. Decades in the [British] Labour Party

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Capitalism...

(continued from page 1)

chicken coop. They suspect what's going to happen—and there is a basis for this suspicion—is that the people that have health care are going to get less. The government will cut Medicare and Medicaid, cut the "gilded" insurance policies. They're talking about taxing the "excess" benefits of a two-worker family with kids. So people pretty much were for health care reform going into it, but they are now very suspicious that who is going to pay is the working class, that working people are going to have to pay for people who are not working. In this country, such suspicions always intersect anti-black racism. This shows the invaluable service that the race/caste oppression of black people in this country plays in helping the bourgeoisie to divide working people along racial lines.

Having said that, it needs to be understood that all health care is rationed in capitalist society, both government health systems and private insurance. As Marxists, we don't call for a "better" reformist plan, like national health insurance. It would be nice if that were in place, but that's not our solution. We are for free, quality health care for all. If there were a socialist revolution tonight, tomorrow all health care would be free. *All* health care—abortions, everything. That's how easy it is to reform health care. The hard part is having the socialist revolution.

AP

May 5: Villagers sifting through rubble of houses destroyed by U.S./NATO air strikes in Farah Province, Afghanistan, that killed dozens.

American Capitalism and the Obama Presidency

The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, opposed Barack Obama when he ran for president. We oppose all *bourgeois* candidates. Moreover, in the case of executive offices—the administrators of the capitalist order, the governors, the mayors, the top cops and the president—we oppose the offices as such. In the past on several occasions we have run for mayor, for example, which is an executive office, expressly stating that we would not take that office if elected. We have since reconsidered the matter, because the very fact of running for executive office carries with it, no matter what you say, the implication that reform is possible within that context. So we no longer run for executive office (see "Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State! Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 61, Spring 2009).

People voted for Obama hoping that something good would happen after the Bush years. Our opponents on the left, although most of them did not openly call for a vote to Obama, said maybe this guy will open things up for people, somehow. And of course everybody who read their papers knew what that meant.

The reason that we didn't vote for Obama is not because we liked or disliked the man; that had nothing to do with it. It's because as communists we understand that the capitalist order is the source and perpetuator of human misery and that the system of private property and the bosses' state that defends it must be overthrown by a socialist revolution led by the working class. There is no other answer to the matter. Our model for that is the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917.

For the reformist left, support to a capitalist politician as president especially reflects their illusions. But is it possible, assuming he even wanted to, for anyone in that office to reform the capitalist system? Georgi Plekhanov, speaking about the nature of human progress, said in his *The Role of the Individual in History*:

> "At the present time we must regard the development of productive forces as the final and most general cause of the historical progress of mankind, and it is these productive forces that determine the consecutive changes in the social relations of men. Parallel with this *general* cause, there are *particular* causes, *i.e., the historical situation* in which the development of the productive forces of a given nation proceeds and which, in the last analysis, is itself created by the development of these forces among other nations, *i.e.*, the same general cause."

The historical situation that we happen to live in has been called by Leon Trotsky the "epoch of imperialist decay" and the "death agony of capitalism." Capitalism was always accompanied by misery, but it did have its era of progress. In this country that era reached its high point in the Civil War with the victory of the North and the smashing of the slave system of labor, which was in fact a social revolution. With the beginning of the 20th century, the major industrial powers began, in their quest to expand their basis of profits and their rule, to conflict with each other in the process of dividing up the planet. The U.S. entered the imperialist order on the world stage in 1898 against the decaying Spanish empire in the Philippines, Cuba, etc. (the Spanish-American War), while simultaneously re-enthralling black people at home through the legal apparatus of Jim Crow segregation in the South. Of course the legal apparatus of Jim Crow is now gone, but it is reflected in every meaningful social statistic: health, life span, jobs. Although it's not particularly the subject of this talk, the oppression of blacks is a fundamental feature of American capitalism that the bourgeoisie uses in dividing the working class and in maintaining the U.S. as the only major country that lacks even a reformist workers party. In other words, workers in this country simply do not generally consider themselves to be part of a working class.

Obama is a member of the new black middle class. By "new" I mean there is now a small layer of blacks in executive offices, in corporate firms, high up in the educational apparatus, in addition to sports and popular entertainment figures. And that's the stratum that Obama comes from. He gives Booker T. Washington-like lectures to black men to get themselves together and start to behave "responsibly," and then he sits down to have a brewski with a cop to explain why cops should be "sensitive" when dealing with black intellectuals like Henry Louis Gates Jr. And of course the cop is now the hero of all the U.S. police forces, which praise his lack of sensitivity, because after all these are the repressive forces that are responsible for controlling this capitalist society for the bourgeois rulers. While doing all this, Obama is also the guy putting the hammer to a key segment of the old black working class, the auto workers, further turning Detroit into a wasteland. This is the domestic face of Obama's role as Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism.

Bettmann

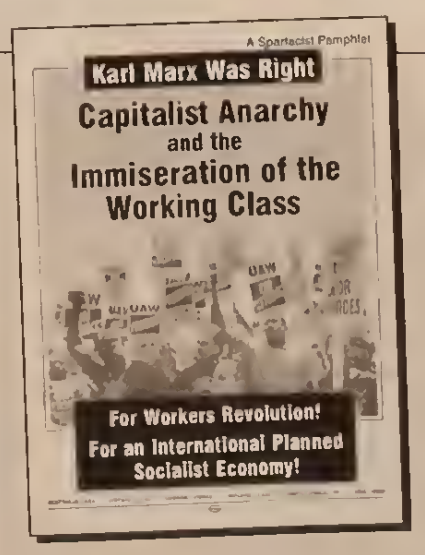
Corbis

Left: Franklin D. Roosevelt signing Social Security Act of 1935. Right: WPA workers in New York in 1930s. Social and economic concessions from bourgeoisie were won by hard class struggle.

Let's look further at the epoch of imperialist decay. To be sure, in the epoch of decay, there are periods of rot and devastation, but there also occurs regrowth. When this "Great Recession" ends, as it someday will, hiring will begin again. Will it be as good? No. The jobs haven't been as good for a long time. You lose your job, the second job is worse, the third job is worse than that. And will there be as many jobs? Probably not. But there will be an uptick in hiring at some point. So what the epoch of imperialist decay means is not something like *The Picture of Dorian Gray* or *Night of the Living Dead*, but rather that, in aggregate, there is more pain than gain for humanity from the capitalist social system. But social systems don't just dissipate and go away. Unlike biological organisms, social organisms have to be put to death, primarily through war and revolution. For example, the most powerful and wealthiest of the imperialist powers, the U.S., arrived at its apogee in the aftermath of World War II, which took place in the epoch of imperialist decay.

What has been the price of that ascendancy? Well, there are the almost 100 million dead from two world wars, the devastation of Europe and much of Asia, the savagery at Hiroshima and Nagasaki where essentially a defenseless people were incinerated by atomic weaponry. Since its ascendancy in the aftermath of the war, the United States has been involved in wars or military actions virtually every year. At least another ten million bodies have been added to the graveyards created by the First and Second World Wars, of course in the service of the spread of "democracy," which is really a gussied-up form of the "white man's burden."

History after the world wars gives ample testimony to the fact that the working class had no side in these wars between the major capitalist powers, not even in the so-called "heroic war against fascism." There was only one side that was appropriate to defend in the Second World War: the Soviet bureaucratically degenerated workers state. Decades later, however, in an historic defeat, the Soviet Union fell to capitalist counterrevolution in 1991-92. The situation today shows an actual historical regression. A false view of Marxism is that it holds that societies always march forward. No, unfortunately great defeats are possible. What we see in Russia and East Europe now is the impact of the inferior, reactionary capitalist social system destroying a social system that, despite the Stalinist bureaucracy's misrule, had in it the roots of social progress—i.e., the overthrow of capitalist rule and the institution of the beginnings of working-class forms of production. We fought against the capitalist counterrevolutions in East Europe and the USSR in 1989-92 and today we defend the remain-



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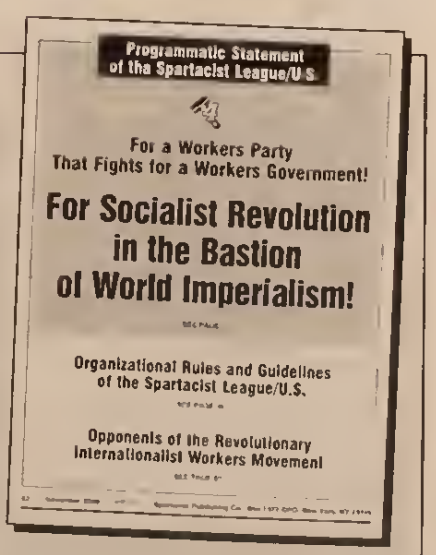

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ing countries like China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba where capitalism has been overthrown. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies. Worldwide, the greatest impact of the fall of the Soviet Union has been on the consciousness of especially the advanced elements of the working class, who no longer tend to see socialism, even in its reformist variant, as something to be fought for. That is a tremendous setback.

Recession, Depression and Roosevelt's "New Deal"

I happened to grow up in the heyday of American imperialism. Unfortunately, I now lose my rights as a geezer to tell people "I had it harder than you did." It's simply not true. And so in the last three or four decades of considerable economic decline, we see the erosion of living standards of ordinary people, with occasional huge gouges (for example, the "end of welfare," orchestrated by Bill Clinton); the ratcheting up of attacks on rights (the "war on drugs," the "war against terror"); a goodly percentage of the black population now finds its "housing" in prisons. In general, things look pretty grim for people.

But one might ask, "With all this rot, why are we better off today than we were in the Great Depression?"—which we are, it must be frankly said. Let me go back for a minute to where we started. The presidency since Lincoln has generally been a succession of nonentities. What did Calvin Coolidge do, what did Chester Alan Arthur do, what did Grover Cleveland do, what did Woodrow Wilson do? Nobody did anything, because they operated within the confines of the system, and the office has never been used, nor will it ever be used, to challenge those confines. There's one putative exception: Franklin D. Roosevelt. FDR was known as some combination of Lenin and Satan by the right wing, and as the guy, for the liberals, who really proved that capitalism can be decent. Both because of the similarities between the Great Depression and now, and because of the sainthood of FDR, it's useful to examine this question. I hope to refute it.

There are two major differences in the world now from the time of the Great Depression: first, the 1917 October Revolution was then a beacon for the working class, and, second, the United States was a *growing* industrial country at that time, the strongest in the world. That no longer pertains. Those are important qualifiers.

Let's compare and contrast Obama and FDR a little bit. There are some similarities: the primary act of both was to stabilize the banks, although they did this by different mechanisms. Roosevelt essentially just closed the bad banks. Obama showered money on the bad banks. The net result was the same: the banks sat on money, they did nothing with it. Why? Because the important thing for capitalists is the ability to realize a profit, and that money will not move until then. It doesn't matter how much money Obama prints. Now the other thing that was similar is that the bigger banks ate the smaller ones, the more stable ate the weaker. That happened both times.

During Roosevelt's "First New Deal," he formed the NRA, the National Industrial Recovery Act, which mainly promoted worker-management "cooperation," if you can imagine that, creating very few jobs. The same with the Tennessee Valley Authority and what became the Civilian Conservation Corps—a minuscule number of jobs were created. What the NRA mostly did is set the basis for the formation of company unions. This did not enchant the working class a great deal, so workers for the most part walked away from them, because a company union is not much good when you want to fight the company.

Now let's look at what's called the "Second New Deal"—that's in 1935. The Works Progress Administration hired more people, still a small percentage of those unemployed, but a couple million people. Social Security was initiated, and from Social Security came unemployment relief, ADC (welfare), etc. And then to supplant the NRA, which had been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1935, there was something called the National Labor Relations Act, also known as the Wagner Act, which was passed later in 1935. This was supposedly to allow the workers to organize—if they behaved well and legally under the system of capitalism.

So one should ask the question: does this reflect the fact that the FDR administration—the executive committee of the capitalist rulers—developed a heart? No, it developed the pretense of a heart, and there's a difference. What really extracted these social concessions from the bourgeoisie were the giant strikes of 1934 in Toledo, on the West Coast in longshore and the Minneapolis trucking strike. Militants began at that time to organize the unemployed as a section of the labor movement. Just to show you FDR's great ambivalence about even the small reforms he initiated, he raised the number of people employed by the government in the Works Progress Administration in 1935, then cut it drastically in 1937 because he thought there was an upturn, and that ushered in another recession. The Great Depression was actually constructed of two recessions—in 1929-33 and 1937-38.

Now, as for the powers of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the employers ignored the NLRB because they thought that it too would be overturned by the Supreme Court. The workers tended to ignore it too, which was a good thing. In other words, what followed was a strike wave. Let me give you a sense of its proportions. In 1934, there were 1,800 strikes; in 1935, there were 2,000; in 1936, 2,100 strikes; in 1937, during the beginning of the second recession, there were 4,700; in 1938, 2,700; in 1939, 2,600 strikes. Nobody was trotting down to the offices of the NLRB and asking "please." They were out there kicking ass on the streets, and some dying in the process.

UAW workers occupied GM plants during 1936-37 Flint sit-down strike.

The great Flint sit-down strike occurred in 1936-37. Anybody remember the NLRB intervening into that? No, it did not. It might have attempted to, but it had no impact as such. Incidentally, the strike wave beginning in 1935 resulted in a doubling of the trade union movement in five years. So it was quite substantial. These workers were betrayed, however, by the reformists, especially the Stalinist Communist Party, in the service of their ties with the Democrats, and in the service of going into the war on the side of Roosevelt.

There is much talk today about Keynesianism. FDR was not a Keynesian. He was a balanced-budget kind of guy. Government expenditures went up some during the Great Depression, accompanied by tax increases. In other words, the government was going to pay its way, unlike with Obama where you just run the printing press and see what happens. For Keynesianism, the answer is supposedly to put money into consumers' hands. You do deficit spending. It wasn't until 1939 that the government started on a course toward significant deficit spending, and the reason for that did not have to do with the economy, it had to do with building weapons. Capitalist governments do need Keynesianism for war, unless they have a very fat treasury and unless they are going to show up on the battlefield without any guns, without any planes, without any tanks. So Keynesianism in fact played no role, has never played any role, in that kind of situation as occurred in the Great Depression. Of course what solved the Depression, as we all know, was World War II: automatic improvement to joblessness, since half the working population was sent off to kill and die on the battlefield.

Office of War Information

Above: World War II bomber factory. Below: February 1945 firebombing of Dresden by U.S. and Britain slaughtered tens of thousands of German civilians. War production, not New Deal, pulled U.S. out of Great Depression.

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Having said that, Obama has done nothing like even the stinting sort of things that FDR did, except to pay off the banks. Moreover, as far as I can tell, there's no talk of doing anything. But Obama doesn't have the spur of class struggle, like FDR did. On the other hand, we know the limits within which the capitalist system operates.

Going into the Second World War, wages were frozen and the right to strike was taken away, with the complete complicity of the trade-union bureaucracy in support of the government's war plan. People worked throughout the course of the war at Depression-level wages, leading to the giant strike wave at the end of the war in 1946. Obama's policy, insofar as he seems to have one, seems more like right-wing economist Milton Friedman's. It's essentially monetarist, you keep the Federal Reserve interest rate very low, at zero percent. Japan brought its federal bank rate to zero percent starting in the mid 1990s. It didn't stimulate the economy, because, again, capitalism depends on generating profits. If profits aren't available, it's very slow. If there are a lot of profits available, it runs very fast and creates the basis for the next crisis.

Today, money going to the consumer is not apparent, as consumer spending continues to fall because people are losing jobs. Those that have money expect to lose their jobs, so they are not going to give it up quite as easily. Or they expect to lose their health care, or they expect to lose their homes—and their fears have reason.

So, are we materially better off today than we were in the Depression? I would say so, but why? Because Social Security exists, because unemployment insurance exists, because food stamps exist—all those things that were the by-products of the social struggles of the 1930s now exist. They didn't exist until later in the Great Depression, and barely then. You

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New Orleans...

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non-company union for the first time since 1927. Also, the American Federation of Teachers won a contract. Jefferson Parish (adjacent to New Orleans) attempted to seal off black New Orleans by building a wall at the entrance to the parish. Jefferson Parish is the same suburb that elected David Duke to the state legislature.

At about the same time, the public housing projects became points of sharp contention between the utterly corrupt police force and the black population. The Black Panthers were rooted out in 1970, but resistance to the cops continued. I knew a fireman whose area covered the Desire Projects (maybe the largest public housing project in the U.S.). To go into this area, a fire truck required four cop cars as escort and would still take sniper fire. To get into the projects to meet with the Panthers, the two of us who went in had to be escorted by Panthers. That the bourgeoisie was not going to repopulate the projects after Katrina was not a surprise.

Rourke/American Statesman

30 August 2005: Desperate families wade through floodwaters on Canal Street the day after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans.

The first two articles in *WV* on Katrina were good pieces of propaganda against a racist atrocity. But later pieces, written seven months or so after the hurricane, began to push a line of a proletarian power center in New Orleans. Such power does exist in other Gulf and South Atlantic ports. I believe that it was the forum that was given by Barry James that appeared in *Black History* that finally began to get the situation in New Orleans right [see "Race, Class and the Fight for a Workers America," reprinted in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 20, December 2007]. The quote in the talk from "Black and Red—Class Struggle Road to Negro Freedom" (1966)—emphasizing that "the fight must be fought *now* to maintain Negroes as part of the working class"—exactly sets the stage for what was going on in New Orleans prior to Katrina. The city had ceased to be a proletarian center long before Katrina. Given the opportunity, the bourgeoisie might opt for a similar tactic in cities like Detroit, although Detroit already has about half—or less—the population it had in 1950.

There is a document from about 1973 that was written in New Orleans. That document says most of what is here, as I recall. It was adopted by a motion in the branch as a basis for doing sales at the ILA hiring hall. Three weeks later the longshoremen wildcatted over not receiving royalty payments. We covered this in *WV* and as I remember sold hundreds of papers. Irvin Joseph, who headed the wildcat, was an out-bureaucrat who later became head of the ILA in New Orleans.■

Capitalism...

(continued from page 7)

can speculate that maybe the more rabid sections of the bourgeoisie could just abolish these, but that's not quite a political reality. If they did that, the Codgers for a Democratic Society would be rolling the guillotines down Pennsylvania Avenue. You're not just going to take everything that people have away from them in one fell swoop. But codgers, unfortunately, are not an adequate social force.

For Workers Revolution

I've tried to argue that the myth about FDR is just that, a myth. Key events that occurred in the course of his administration were, in an important way, a loss for humanity. The United States' victory in World War II, its domination of the world, is a loss for humanity, a tremendous blow. And in particular, those things that seem to be benefits, he had nothing directly to do with, except to respond in an effort to buy off and placate the class struggle that was seriously ignited at that time.

What I've tried to show is that reforms are the by-product of social struggle, that those reforms are eroded and endangered constantly by the trade-union bureaucracy, which, in its allegiance to capitalism, is willing to make important concessions. In the case of the once very powerful auto workers union, it's not dead yet, but it has a moribund quality. The trade-union bureaucracy, the labor lieutenants of capital, operates to contain and/or, sometimes simultaneously, betray the class struggle. In this country that is politically expressed through its ties with the Democratic Party, of which it is a significant component. I think at any given Democratic presidential convention, 25-30 percent of the delegates are trade unionists. The Democratic Party is not a workers party, it's a bourgeois party. But it must be recognized that there is substantial integration of the tops of the trade-union movement into that party, to the detriment of the unions.

I have also tried to demonstrate that the only way forward for humanity is the smashing of capitalism through working-class social revolution. It might be mentioned, in terms of health care, for example, that only those countries that overthrew capitalist rule—Cuba, the Soviet Union and much of East Europe—provided free health care. It wasn't highly elegant, but it was available to *everybody*. (Although in Cuba they do fairly sophisticated things, and they did fairly sophisticated things in the Soviet Union, too.) And because it was available to everybody, you just got people to the doctor and treated them.

Some people ask, what's going to happen under socialism? Well, of course, some problems are more complex than others, like restoking the industrial base of this economy, which would require some thought and planning. But I promise that, in an American workers state, the housing problem, like the health care crisis, would be quickly over. Is there any question that there are houses out there that people can live in, empty office buildings, etc.? And it's possible in the short term to provide everybody with a job by just shrinking the number of hours you work. That's what the Transitional Program, written by Trotsky in 1938, suggests: a manner in which revolutionaries can raise demands, unattainable in their entirety under capitalism, thus leading to the understanding that what is necessary is a revolutionary solution. There is the demand for a sliding scale of wages and hours; for the nationalization of the banks without compensation; the nationalization of important firms, again without compensation; the formation of workers defense guards. Let me read from the Transitional Program:

> "The orientation of the masses is determined first by the objective conditions of decaying capitalism and second by the treacherous politics of the old workers' organizations. Of these factors, the first of course is the decisive one: the laws of history are stronger than the bureaucratic apparatus."

So why don't we just go up and ask Barack Obama to nationalize the banks without compensation? Well, you'd probably be arrested for drug abuse, with some reason to think it true. So let me quote from Trotsky on how one uses this kind of program: "The difference between these demands and the muddleheaded reformist slogan of 'nationalization' lies in the following: (1) we reject indemnification; (2) we warn the masses against demagogues of the People's Front"—in today's parlance, that means reformists—"who, giving lip service to nationalization, remain in reality agents of capital; (3) we call on the masses to rely only upon their own revolutionary strength; (4) we link up the question of expropriation with that of seizure of power by the workers and farmers." (Small farmers were a significant element in American society then, which they no longer are.)

What our reformists often do is make one demand that seems possible to them, like the call for nationalization. The problem is, in that context, it is *begging*. Who are you asking? Do you really think that America's imperialist rulers are really going to grant these kinds of reforms? Well of course the reformists do, because they think that this system can be reformed.

There is class struggle in the world, incidentally, but not much in the United States, and there hasn't been much for decades now. But, as Friedrich Engels pointed out, the capitalist order is a system that socially organizes production, on the one hand, but the product of that socially organized production is, on the other hand, anarchically appropriated by the ruling class. There are those that labor and those that own the products of that labor. This system is inherently volatile, but not predictably so. If you ask me, "When is the class struggle going to be?", I have to say, "I don't know." Nor is there a recipe to engender the class struggle that we Marxists know will occur. But the very conditions that grind down the working class, the same conditions that demoralize workers and set them one against the other in a fight to survive—that is, the capitalist mode of production—these same conditions also propel the working class toward unity in battle against its exploiters. As long as capitalism exists, it will generate the conditions that spawn class struggle.

Muhammad/NY Times

Transport Workers Union members rally in New York City against MTA attempts to extract more concessions, October 14.

So what should people do today? Well, what we need is the kind of social overturn that I've talked about. But it cannot be effected without the forging of a revolutionary Trotskyist party. And it will be necessary for class-conscious workers to drive the trade-union bureaucratic betrayers out of their positions of power in the unions. So what must be done today is to begin to accrue those that have committed to forming a revolutionary workers party. Our reformist opponents have no such commitment. We are unique on the left for that commitment. Because of that, the reformists consider us kind of obnoxious, because we point out that they are opponents of socialist revolution and we show the many ways in which they betray and sell out the struggles of the working class and peddle illusions in capitalism. So, we are looking for people who would aspire to some day carry this little booklet, the Transitional Program, into their plants and factories and to play a role in mobilizing the working class in its historic task of overturning this very savage capitalist order.■

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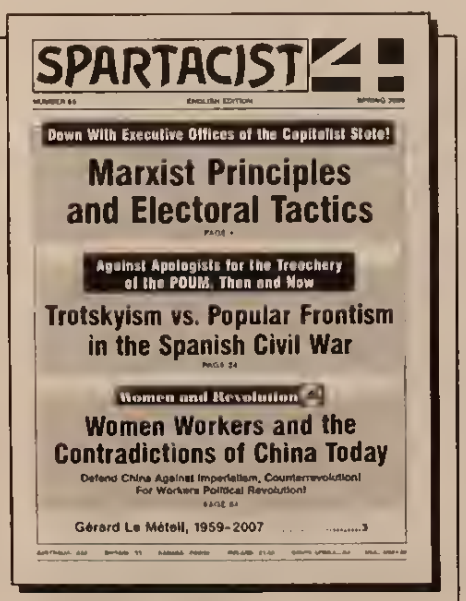
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Defend China Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution! For Workers Political Revolution!
Gérard Le Méteil, 1959–2007

LRP...

(continued from page 5)

> didn't do it for you. Support to Hugo Chávez didn't do it for you. Them bragging that they stood on the barricades of Boris Yeltsin in 1991 didn't do it for you, which I think, actually, speaks a lot to where you're coming from."

As does the slogan "all Israel is occupied territory."

For Schwartz and the LRP—people who hate the existing workers states (Cuba, China, North Korea and Vietnam)—calling for a Palestinian "workers state" and a socialist federation of the Middle East is just a way to dress up Palestinian nationalism. Their answer to the conflicting national claims of the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples is to reverse the terms of oppression, for a single Palestinian "workers" state where the Hebrew-speaking nation would be denied the democratic right to national self-determination. The SYC speaker at their forum pointed out, "It's not the class line, but 'good and progressive' peoples against 'bad, reactionary' ones that determines their line."

In his presentation, Schwartz had thundered that Marx, Lenin and Trotsky stood for self-determination only for oppressed nations, not oppressor nations. Actually, Lenin's aim wasn't to pit nation against nation but to take the national question off the agenda in order to bring the class question to the fore. The SYC speaker at the forum exposed this shameless fabrication:

> "Lenin was for the rights of all nations—and if you don't believe me, here's Lenin. This is from 'The Right of Nations to Self-Determination': 'However, we cannot move towards that goal [uniting the workers of all nations] unless we combat all nationalism and uphold the equality of the various nations'."

The LRP responded to our arguments with an outrageous smear, insisting that it was not possible to be for the national rights of both peoples, so we must be in favor of "apartheid or ethnic cleansing" for one or the other. For an organization that claims the Hebrew-speaking nation doesn't have the right to exist, this takes some chutzpah!

U.S. flag above Confederate banner atop state capitol building in Montgomery, Alabama, symbolizes dominance of Northern capital in the South.

Spartacist

Grotesque caption by LRP "Jim Crow socialists": their only complaint about KKK emblem is its position on the flagpole (left). Moscow, August 1991: Confederate flag flown by counterrevolutionaries on Yeltsin's barricades (above). International Marxist Tendency, LRP sided with capitalist counterrevolution in Soviet degenerated workers state.

As Marxists, we defend the Palestinian people against the brutal Zionist occupation, which has reduced one of the most cosmopolitan populations in the region to dire poverty and desperation. But the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples are geographically interpenetrated—both lay claim to the same sliver of land so that, under capitalism, the exercise of national self-determination by one can come only at the expense of the other. The equitable resolution of not only the Palestinian national question, but all of the myriad, conflicting national claims in the region requires the revolutionary overturn of the Zionist state and the existing Arab states in the region, and the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East.

What is desperately needed is a *class* axis of struggle, not pandering to Arab nationalism, which, like all nationalism, is based on the false unity of the downtrodden and exploited with their "own" exploiters and would-be exploiters. As the SYC comrade proceeded to explain, "The only way to smash the Zionist citadel is from the inside out. And that requires Hebrew-Arab workers struggle within Israel itself."

Anti-Communism Abroad, Class Collaboration at Home

In the United States, a country founded on the bedrock of black oppression, the LRP's "horse race of peoples" led them into the arms of the racist American ruling class. As a comrade from the Labor Black League for Social Defense noted at the August 18 forum, during the Boston busing crisis in the mid 1970s:

> "these 'separate but equal' socialists solidarized with white racists in opposition to busing. The LRP claimed that integration 'means the *subordination* of blacks to the dominant whites' [*Torch*, December 1974]. The LRP stands in opposition to integration and their opposition to busing was a capitulation to both the racists and the black nationalists who despaired of the possibility of integrated struggle uniting black and white workers."

When this rotten position was exposed at the forum the assembled LRPers could do nothing but grumble and cynically ask why we didn't also bring up the picture of the Confederate flag they ran in their paper. Our comrades obliged, holding up the photo from the Winter 1976-77 issue of *Socialist Voice*, which did not have a word of protest against the banner of the Southern slavocracy, but objected only to it being flown below the U.S. flag!

The speaker from the Labor Black League also quoted the LRP's article, "Obama and Racist America." That article poses the question, "Could a Black President Be Bad for Blacks?" and then answers, "It will no doubt be accepted as obvious by most people that the election of Barack Obama as this country's first Black President would mark an historic victory against racism. In one sense, it would" (*Proletarian Revolution*, Spring 2008). The comrade from the Labor Black League responded, "The election of Obama will do nothing, nothing to change the nature of black oppression in racist, capitalist America."

At the forum, Schwartz openly embraced the LRP's virulent anti-Sovietism, denouncing our defense of the Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s against the CIA-funded, imperialist-backed *mujahedin*. These must have been welcome words to the smarmy Bolshevik Tendency and their recent "split," Samuel Trachtenberg's one-man "Revolutionary Regroupment," who lauded the presentation while politely suggesting that the Hebrew-speaking people might have the right to exist. The LBL speaker had their number, noting the BT "departed our organization in the '80s because they couldn't stand our unflinching military defense of the USSR during Reagan's Cold War."

As the representative of the Spartacist League stated:

> "Yes, we said 'Hail the Red Army in Afghanistan!' We proudly stand on that tradition. That was the only force that was bringing social progress to the Afghan peoples. It meant defense of the southern flank of the Soviet Union against imperialist provocation. And those who opposed that stood on the side of the imperialists. Don't get up here and lecture about the side of the imperialists and the side of the oppressed states. Those who opposed the Soviet intervention stood on the side of the imperialists."

That's where the LRP and Schwartz found one another. We can only conclude, they deserve each other—but who knows if this marriage of convenience will last.■

Getty

Palestinian woman cooks on open fire outside her shack in Gaza, November 2008. Israel's years-long blockade has reduced population to desperation.

CORRECTIONS

March 3, 2009

Dear *Young Spartacus*,

I noticed an error in Seymour's talk on the black question (WV930) ["Revolutionary Marxists and the Fight for Black Freedom" (13 February)], when he says that "King led a march for 'open housing' into the white Chicago suburb of Cicero." In fact King cancelled the march to appease [Chicago mayor] Daley; it was others like SNCC and CORE who went ahead with it.

Is a correction already in the works? A useful book on this question is *Confronting the Color Line. The Broken Promise of the Civil Rights Movement in Chicago* by Anderson and Pickering.

What Seymour said is actually a widely held myth, and correcting it would be an opportunity to illustrate how the Democratic Party smothers the fight for black freedom.

Keith

* * *

In "SDS Old & New: From Tepid Liberalism to Radicalism and Back Again" (*WV* No. 927, 2 January), referring to Trotsky's "For Grynszpan: Against Fascist Pogrom Gangs and Stalinist Scoundrels" (February 1939) we described Herschel Grynszpan as "a German youth who had assassinated a Nazi." As a reader pointed out, Grynszpan was born in Germany to Jewish parents who had immigrated from Poland.

We thank our readers for these corrections.

Spartacus Youth Club Events

TORONTO

Wednesday, October 28, 6 p.m.

The Russian Revolution: How the Working Class Took Power

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall
Room 1074
100 St. George Street

Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Thursday, October 29, 6:30 p.m.

The Capitalist State: Reform vs. Revolution

University of British Columbia
SUB Room 42V

Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Visit the ICL Web Site
www.icl-fi.org

BAY AREA

Thursday, November 5, 6:30 p.m.

The Civil Rights Movement: How Liberals and Reformists Derailed the Struggle for Integration

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks E

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

LOS ANGELES

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Wednesday, October 28, 6 p.m.
UCLA, Haines Hall A78

Sunday, November 1, 12 Noon
3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215, L.A.

Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Thursday, October 29, 7:30 p.m.

State and Revolution

Hunter College, West Building, Rm. 411

Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nyspl@tiac.net

Syphilitic Chain...

(continued from page 3)

to the 1991 imperialist onslaught against Iraq, Cockburn wagged his finger at those leftists calling for "U.S. Out of the Persian Gulf!" Instead, he argued for "the conversion of the forces confronting Iraq in the region into a genuinely multilateral force—with diminished U.S. presence—under a genuine U.N. command" (*Nation*, 8 October 1990).

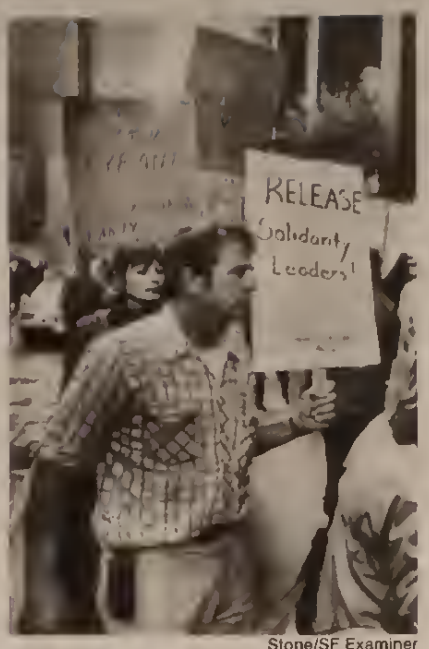
At the time, Cockburn and Mackler's Socialist Action stood together in endorsing an antiwar coalition that promoted UN sanctions against Iraq, which were the prelude to the 1991 war and which continued after it, costing the lives of over one million Iraqis. So Cockburn has something of an inside view in presenting some of the details of Mackler's long and sordid history of subservience to the labor tops in a variety of "antiwar" and other coalitions. In particular, Cockburn points to Socialist Action's adamant opposition to including any call for "No US Intervention in the Middle East" or in defense of the Palestinians when it played a leading role in the 1980s pro-Democratic Party coalitions protesting U.S. intervention in Central America and in opposition to apartheid South Africa.

In his lengthy reply to Cockburn, Mackler indulges in much pompous windbaggery about what it takes to "build a united-front-type, democratic, and effective antiwar movement." With this as his alibi, he essentially pleads guilty to all charges. Mackler concedes that Socialist Action's opposition to the inclusion of a "demand on Palestine" at the time of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and the first Palestinian *intifada* was indeed motivated by concern that "labor would walk," i.e., that it would offend the labor bureaucrats who toe the line of the rabid pro-Zionism of the Democratic Party. Now, he pontificates that if the October 17 Antiwar Coalition had "pressed forward" with the protest against Pelosi "we would have also risked the formal support of the S.F. Labor Council" (which subsequently was secured). Opining that "labor's political break with the class enemy is not on the agenda today," Mackler declares that it is "eminently more reasonable to approach the organized labor movement patiently and with due care." This is all a long way of saying that selling out to the trade-union bureaucracy and the Democratic Party is what "building the movement" is all about. And Mackler is a practiced hand.

Mackler contests Cockburn's charge that Socialist Action tried to bully a woman of Lebanese descent to prevent her from raising the defense of the Palestinians at a 1980s coalition meeting in a packed union hall. We don't know about that. But we can testify that thuggery has long been wielded by Mackler and much of the reformist left to silence any opponents of their grotesque class collaborationism. During the Vietnam War, when he was a member of the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Mackler was a leader of the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC). While the best of the youth radicalized by the struggle against the Vietnam War stood for the military victory of the National Liberation Front/Democratic Republic of Vietnam, NPAC was busy sealing an alliance with the defeatist wing of the American bourgeoisie, which sought to cut U.S. imperialism's losses in its dirty, losing war in Indochina. This alliance was sealed with the blood of leftists. At a July 1971 NPAC conference, SWP goons viciously attacked members of the Spartacist League and Progressive Labor-SDS who protested against Democratic Party Senator Vance Hartke, a keynote speaker at that conference (where he appeared side by side with "progressive" labor bureaucrat Victor Reuther).

After emerging from the SWP in the early 1980s, one of Socialist Action's first political acts was to serve as goons for the SF labor bureaucrats at a solidarity rally with the 1983 Greyhound strike. After listening to over an hour of empty speeches by the bureaucrats, a couple of thousand militant workers took to the streets and headed to the Greyhound terminal, where they stopped scab buses from running. At a rally a week later, when militant workers again defied the sellout bureaucrats and set up picket lines at the terminal, they were met with a line of bureaucrats and "socialist" goons, including Mackler.

At its debut public meeting in the Bay Area, Mackler boasted of Socialist Action's role in organizing a "workers defense guard" so that "the crazies wouldn't run the demonstration," specifically pointing to the "spectacle of a tiny sect of 20 people leading the chants to workers of



Stone/SF Examiner

Nat Weinstein, a former Socialist Action leader, at 1981 rally for counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarność.

2,000." It was left to none other than Steve Zeltzer—today Mackler's nemesis for putting forward the nefarious motion calling for a protest against Pelosi—to point to supporters of the Spartacist League in the audience. Mackler congratulated him for identifying the "culprits."

We happily plead guilty to having played a role in militant labor action when workers picked up our chants of "Picket lines mean don't cross!" as they surged toward the Greyhound terminal. Out of such struggles we seek to arm the working class with a conscious understanding of its social power and historic interest to wage a political confrontation with the capitalist class enemy. Mackler's role as a goon against class struggle was, at the time, matched in Socialist Action's avid promotion of the CIA-bankrolled "union" in Poland, Solidarność, whose aim was the counterrevolutionary overthrow of the gains of the Polish deformed workers state.

As for Steve Zeltzer, as coincidence would have it he now promotes the so-called "Transport Workers Solidarity Committee," which has little to do with militant labor action and everything to do with providing a platform for Heyman and other labor fakers to posture as "militants." But when the rubber hits the road to the Democratic Party, long paved by the labor bureaucracy, it's a different story. While Heyman's original motion calling for the May Day port shutdown called for "an immediate end to the war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan and the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Middle East," these demands never saw the light of day. Instead, Heyman not only provided left cover for the red-white-and-blue patriotism of the ILWU International but also himself chimed in with his own appeal that "we want the troops home."

This social-patriotic call has long been a central rallying cry of the so-called "antiwar movement." But while the sons and daughters of the working class are used as cannon fodder for the military adventures of U.S. imperialism, these aren't our troops. They are the armed forces for the bloody wars and occupations of U.S. imperialism abroad and the violent suppression of the working class, blacks, immigrants and all of the oppressed "at home." The side of the working class and all genuine opponents of U.S. imperialism is in defense of the peoples of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan *against* the occupiers and their allies and *for* class struggle against the capitalist rulers at home.

Mackler proclaims that the purpose of the October 17 Antiwar Coalition is to build "a massive and successful challenge to the ongoing and expanding U.S. imperialist wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan...." In fact, the opposite is true. Far from fighting war, their kowtowing to the labor bureaucracy and the Democratic Party actually promotes war, because it cements the ties that bind the working class to the continued rule of U.S. imperialism.

The only program to end war is the revolutionary struggle to get rid of this decaying system. Imperialist war is the necessary outgrowth of the drive between competing capitalist powers to increase their profits through capturing foreign markets and raw materials around the globe. Our purpose is to build a workers party to give a conscious class-struggle leadership to struggles against U.S. imperialism and its bloody depredations against the peoples of the world and the working class and oppressed at home. Grounded in a program of revolutionary internationalism, such a party will fight not only for the immediate interests of the working class but also for its liberation, and the emancipation of all of humanity, from capitalist class rule, by bringing to power the socialist rule of the multiracial proletariat.■

Mexico...

(continued from page 12)

liquidation of the state-run Central Light and Power Company (LFC), throwing its more than 40,000 workers into the streets (with more than 20,000 retirees left in uncertainty). Last night, thousands of Federal Police and military personnel occupied the company's installations as a preventive measure against the powerful Mexican Union of Electrical Workers (SME). The government is attempting to destroy the SME, one of the oldest unions with the most combative reputation in the country. Previously, the government had refused to recognize the elected union leadership by denying it the anti-worker "*toma de nota*" [procedure by which the government validates the election of new union officials] and had frozen the union's assets. *Bourgeois state: Hands off workers organizations!*

Justified in the name of increasing productivity and against "operational and financial inefficiency," this attack will mean the elimination of labor gains obtained through decades of struggle by SME workers, and it will deal harsh blows to the already impoverished population in the center of the country through the eventual elimination of subsidies to the vital service of electric energy. The disappearance of LFC is a step toward privatizing the electric industry through the elimination of the main obstacle, the SME. Privatization would open the road to unbridled exploitation and would mean even greater subordination of the Mexican economy to imperialism. *This new onslaught by the bosses is a savage attack against the workers movement and against all the poor. Defend the SME! Mobilize the social power of the working class—for labor strikes in solidarity with the SME! Down with the privatization of the energy sector!*

In going after a nerve center of the workers movement, this attack furthermore has the purpose of demoralizing and atomizing the working class as a whole. The victory of this onslaught would embolden the bourgeoisie in its reinforcement, already under way, of the repressive state apparatus—under the guise of the "war on drugs," whose real targets are combative workers and left organizations—in the face of the devastating effects of the international economic crisis. According to the bosses, we should "all" tighten our belts. Indeed, the nature of capitalism dictates that the workers and peasants around the world must pay the price of the economic crises. It is necessary to destroy this system and replace it through socialist revolution and its international extension (especially to the U.S.), with an internationally collectivized and planned economy centered on the pursuit of satisfying the needs of the population.

The government plans to use workers from the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE), organized by the SUTERM union [a corporatist union which organizes electrical workers nationally], to operate LFC. For decades, SUTERM's venal corporatist bureaucracy has acted in cahoots with the bourgeois government and has adapted to the exploitative "productivity" ideal that the bosses want to impose on what was until yesterday the LFC. *SUTERM workers: Don't be scabs for Calderón—don't replace SME workers!*

To fight effectively against this attack, it is necessary to combat the widespread illusions in the bourgeois populism of AMLO [former presidential candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador], the PRD, and its appendage, the PT [Labor Party], all representatives of the class enemy who today pose as "allies" of the SME. The proletariat has unique class interests and enormous social power based on its role in the productive process; this means it is called upon to play the leading role in championing the aspirations of all the poor and oppressed through its own emancipation and the establishment of a workers and peasants government. The working class does not lack the will to fight; but as long as it remains dominated by the politics of bourgeois nationalist populism, it will be derailed towards illusions in the democratic reform of capitalism. The purpose of AMLO and his PRD is to perpetuate this system of exploitation and oppression.

We reject the petty-bourgeois prejudices according to which defense of unions depends on the politics of their leadership—like those who refused to defend the pro-PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party] miners union against the attacks of the PAN. Genuine Trotskyists defend all workers organizations against the state. As we wrote in March 2006 in defense of the miners union [reprinted in *WV* No. 869, 28 April 2006]:

> "Class-struggle defense of the unions requires a fight for their complete and unconditional independence from the bourgeoisie and its state—the prerequisite to achieving trade-union democracy and to transforming the unions into organs of struggle for the interests of the great exploited masses. This means breaking with all illusions in the bosses' parties—PRI, PRD, PAN. This means a fight to build a revolutionary workers party to smash the profit-driven, murderous system of capitalism and replace it with the rule of the working class through international socialist revolution. That is the purpose of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)."■

Publication of the Grupo Espartaquista de México

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Basque Nationalists...

(continued from page 12)

and barred from participating in Spain's "democratic" elections.

The European Court of Human Rights recently granted its official support to these police-state measures, characterizing them as a "vital social need," which is "necessary in a democracy" (*El País*, 1 July). It could not be clearer that capitalist democracy is nothing but a convenient parliamentary fig leaf for the dictatorship of the capitalist class over the workers and oppressed. "Human rights" means the right of the capitalist class to exploit the working class and send its cops against those they deem dangerous for their rule. Against the crackdown by the Spanish and French capitalist states, the workers movement must oppose the banning of nationalist organizations and struggle for the right of self-determination for the Basque people. This is the only antidote to the chauvinist poison dividing the working class between Basques and non-Basques, a split the Spanish bourgeoisie needs in order to continue to impose its system of capitalist oppression.

Following the recent arrests, the Spanish top cop, the social democrat Alfredo Pérez Rubalcaba, came to Paris on August 26 to meet Brice Hortefeux, the new French minister of police, to celebrate the collaboration between the police forces of the two countries. This collaboration was sealed in blood in the 1980s, under the social-democratic governments of François Mitterrand in France and Felipe González in Spain, with the setting up of the GAL [Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación, Anti-Terrorist Liberation Groups] death squads. At least 27 alleged Basque nationalists were murdered by the GAL. Since then, this collaboration has continued to flourish, including a decade ago under the government of the Socialists Lionel Jospin and Jean-Luc Mélenchon and the Communist Marie-George Buffet. Today the repression targets not only Basque nationalists but also undocumented workers from Africa who risked their lives to reach Spain and the rest of Europe. Measures are increasingly being adopted to deport immigrant workers, including those who have become legal residents. We demand, in Spain as well as in France: ***Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with the deportations!***

At the August 26 police summit, Rubalcaba particularly insisted that the persecution of the ETA is the "most important problem in Spain at this time" (see the video of his press conference at www.interieur.gouv.fr). This is taking place as the economic crisis devastates Spain even more than most other European countries. Officially, there are nearly four million unemployed in Spain, one fifth of the labor force. Rubalcaba's declaration is an example of how the Spanish bourgeoisie uses repression against the Basque people to scapegoat the Basques for the capitalist crisis and prevent any proletarian mobilization against the massive layoffs and the evictions of many heavily indebted families from their homes. It is a classic example of the divide-and-rule policies of the bourgeoisie. In Spain, as well as on the other side of the Pyrenees [mountains dividing Spain from France], it is necessary, in order to achieve the revolutionary unity of the proletariat, that the labor movement mobilize in defense of the Basque people and defend its ***right to self-determination, including the right to independence from Spain and/or France***. However, the reformist left in Spain, which is totally dedicated to the defense of the interests of its own capitalist ruling class, is now openly or implicitly on the side of its own bourgeoisie and the social-democratic government against the Basque nationalists.

AP

Suspected ETA militant arrested in joint raid by French and Spanish cops on August 19 in Corbier-Villarembert, France.

When the ETA criminally plants bombs in restaurants and other tourist spots, it potentially targets everybody. (Tourism is a cornerstone of the country's economy and provides a significant portion of jobs.) On 30 December 2006, at the Madrid airport, two young immigrants from Ecuador were killed during an attack for which the ETA claimed responsibility. By unleashing violence between peoples, the ETA fuels the nationalist fears and hatreds on all sides and helps the Spanish reformists unite the non-Basque working class behind the Spanish bourgeoisie. The Basque nationalists simply want a separate Basque national state, free from the Spanish and French oppressors—a *bourgeois state* that defends the specific interests of the Basque bourgeoisie abroad—and in the Basque region itself, against the workers, whether Basque or of non-Basque origin.

The kidnapping and execution of cops, bourgeois politicians and capitalist bosses are not crimes against the working class, but are futile actions flowing from the nationalist perspective of the ETA. They are counterposed to the strategy of mobilizing the oppressed masses (in particular, the Spanish and Catalan masses) and to the perspective of socialist revolution on both sides of the Pyrenees. As Marxist-Leninists, we are opposed to the petty-bourgeois strategy of individual terrorism in the fight against capitalist oppression. Our starting point is the historical interests of the proletariat, which under capitalism, because of its relationship to the means of production, is the only class having the social power to overthrow the capitalist system. Nevertheless, when the oppressed act against the bourgeoisie and its state, we defend them against capitalist repression.

The labor movement must defend the Basque nationalists against repression, while opposing their ideology. With its crackdown in the Basque country, the bourgeoisie aims to divide the entire multiethnic workers movement. In a region where polarization along nationalist lines can mobilize tens of thousands of people in demonstrations either for or against Basque national rights, the struggle by the proletarian vanguard must include an active fight against national oppression. Without this crucial element, the historical power of nationalist ideology, the tremendous weight of brutal national oppression and the social-chauvinism of the French and Spanish left combine to push Basque workers into the arms of the Basque nationalists, who are currently the main force in the unions in the region (see our article on the Basque question in *Le Bolchévik* No. 146, Summer 1998).

The French reformist left considers, first of all, that the Basque question is an exclusively Spanish problem. The left thereby implicitly defends the unity and indivisibility of the French capitalist republic—despite the fact that, in the European Union elections a few months ago, some 10,000 votes went to the nationalist slates in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques [the region that includes the French Basque country]. Lutte Ouvrière (LO) equates the terror carried out by the social democratic-led capitalist government in Spain with attacks by the ETA: "The policy of the ETA, which in fact considers all Spaniards, including workers, as enemies, is obviously criminal. But they are not the only ones sowing confusion within the Spanish working class. The Spanish left, whose sole ambition is to form a government to manage the interests of the bourgeoisie and which continues to align itself with a right wing still strongly influenced by Francoism, leads to the same consequences" (*Lutte de Classe*, April 2007). The reformists of LO are well known for capitulating to the "antiterrorist" campaigns of the bourgeoisie, particularly in their refusal to oppose Vigipirate, the racist police mobilization in French train stations and airports.

As for the Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste (New Anti-Capitalist Party, NPA) of Olivier Besancenot and Alain Krivine, to our knowledge it has yet to take a position on the Basque question. Its previous incarnation, the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), published an article in *Rouge* (1 February 2007) stating: "The other Basque left groups must convince the abertzale [nationalist] left that the ETA must lay down its arms, not because the Spanish state demands it as a condition for resuming talks, but because this is indispensable to building a democratic alliance for national self-determination, which is the only thing that will allow a transformation of today's majority sentiment of the Basque society into a mobilization of the citizenry." In fact, even though they occasionally demand freedom for some Basque activists, they want to disarm the Basque activists in the name of capitalist "democracy," which is the oppressor of the Basques. Thirty-six years ago, Krivine's Spanish comrades liquidated their organization in the Basque region into a branch of Basque nationalism, which originated in the political orbit of the ETA. Today, they capitulate directly to the post-Francoist Spanish capitalist state.

The workers struggles of the 1930s and 1970s in Spain showed that the solution to the national question in Spain is inextricably linked to the struggle for workers power throughout the peninsula. We fight to build a Leninist proletarian vanguard party which would defend the right of self-determination of the Basques, on both sides of the Pyrenees. Only such a party will be able to unite Basques and Catalans with the workers throughout Spain and, beyond the Pyrenees, France in a common struggle for workers revolution, which in Spain will sweep away the legacy of Francoism by overthrowing the Spanish bourgeoisie, including its Basque and Catalan components, and establishing a workers government. ***Down with the witch-hunt against the Basque nationalists! For Trotskyist parties in Spain and France, part of a reforged Fourth International!*** ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Mexico: Federal Police Occupy Power Plants

Defend SME Electrical Workers Union!

Reuters photos

Left: Federal police and military occupy LFC power plant in Mexico City, October 11, in government drive to destroy SME union. Right: Hundreds of thousands protest in Mexico City against closure of plant, October 15.

Statement of the Grupo Espartaquista de México

OCTOBER 19—Hundreds of thousands marched in Mexico City on October 15 in defense of the SME electrical workers union, all of whose members were left jobless on October 10 when the government dissolved the state-owned company where they had worked. In addition to the numerous contingents of electrical workers in what was one of the largest mobilizations in the union's history, there were contingents from many other unionized workforces, including miners and metal workers, flight attendants and pilots, transit and health care workers, and the UNT union federation. The electrical workers were also joined by large student contingents from the main national public university, UNAM, and affiliated high schools, as well as peasant and social organizations and thousands of others. Opposing the privatization of the electric energy industry, protesters demanded that the government decree be reversed and that the workers be given their jobs back. At the rear of the march was a contingent led by López Obrador (known as AMLO) and his followers, including from the bourgeois-populist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), who, due to the massive attendance, were able to get to the Zócalo (central square) only after the rally had ended.

It is vital for the multiracial U.S. working class to stand in solidarity with their class brothers and sisters in Mexico. We reprint below an October 11 statement by the Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, titled "Liquidation of LFC—Brutal Privatizing Attack: Defend the SME! Mobilize the Power of the Working Class! Federal Police Out of LFC! Break with AMLO and the PRD! Forge a Workers Party!"

* * *

The PAN [National Action Party] federal government of Felipe Calderón has launched the most brutal anti-worker attack of recent decades through the

continued on page 10

For the Right of Self-Determination for the Basque People!

Free ETA Basque Nationalists Now!

France, Spain

We print below an article translated from Le Bolchévik *No. 189 (September 2009), newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyste de France, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).*

LE BOLCHEVIK

PARIS, September 2—On August 19, Alherto Machain Beraza, Beraza Aitzol Etxaburu and Andoni Sarasola were arrested in Savoie [France] during a joint raid by French and Spanish cops. All three are suspected of belonging to the Basque pro-independence group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (Basque Homeland and Freedom, ETA) and of having provided it with weapons and explosives. Currently, 172 people are imprisoned in France as part of the crackdown on the Basque nationalist movement (*Le Figaro*, 1 September). The French government boasts of having, so far this year, handed over 15 other Basque nationalists to the Spanish police under [Prime Minister] José Luis Zapatero's social-democratic government; they join the hundreds of political prisoners who are today rotting in Spanish jails. According to the Basque nationalist newspaper *Gara* (25 March 2008), in February 2008 there were 739 Basque nationalist prisoners in France and Spain, out of a population of some two million Basques [in both countries]. Such a high number has not been seen since 1969, during the dark years of Franco's Spain. *We demand: Free all the Basque nationalist activists now! Drop the charges against them!*

These arrests take place only a few weeks after several bomb attacks, notably against barracks of the Spanish Guardia Civil in which two guards were killed; there were also attacks against the headquarters of the Socialist Party in Durango and tourist spots in Majorca, in which nobody was hurt. These attacks show that, contrary to claims by the French and Spanish cops, the ETA, which has been in existence for 50 years, is far from having been dismantled. The nationalist movement is fighting increasingly harsh national oppression. The political organization Batasuna, which is considered the ETA's political arm, has been banned throughout Europe, and any organization suspected of being related to it, or simply not hostile to it, is regularly banned

continued on page 11

AP

Arrasate, Basque region, Spain: Riot police confront protesters supporting ETA prisoners, September 25.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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No. 946 | GCU C-701 | 6 November 2009

Down With the Occupation of Afghanistan!

All U.S. Troops Out of Iraq Now!

As the U.S. rulers prepare to draw down troop levels in Iraq, the brutal, corrupt and devastated society that is their legacy is starting to come apart at the seams. On October 25, a pair of car bombs decimated the Iraqi Ministry of Justice and the office of the governor of Baghdad province, killing 155 people. This came about two months after bombs destroyed the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs, killing about 100 people. Meanwhile, the bombings of residential neighborhoods, assassination of religious pilgrims and other interethnic bloodletting, while down from the gory highs of a few years ago, continue apace. Since June 30, when Washington proclaimed that almost all U.S. troops had withdrawn from urban areas to bases on the outskirts of Baghdad and other cities, almost 400 Iraqi civilians have lost their lives in sectarian violence.

President Barack Obama came to office promising to reduce U.S. troop levels in Iraq in order to ratchet up the U.S./NATO occupation of Afghanistan. Obama's top commander in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, recently called for as many as 40,000 additional troops, warning that failure to "reverse insurgent momentum" in Afghanistan "risks an outcome where defeating the insurgency is no longer possible" (*New York Times*, 21 September). All this is further complicated for the U.S. by the recent fraudulent elections in Afghanistan and the announcement by opposition candidate Abdullah Abdullah that he will not participate in the runoff election that the U.S. pressured Hamid Karzai into holding.

With administration officials still debating McChrystal's request, Obama, in "an unannounced move" revealed by the *Washington Post* (13 October), authorized the Pentagon to dispatch 13,000 more troops to Afghanistan. Along with the 21,000 troops that Obama sent to Afghanistan in March, this will raise the total number of U.S. forces deployed in Iraq (now 120,000) and Afghanistan (soon to number 68,000) above the peak reached during the Iraq "surge" ordered by President Bush almost three years ago.

Potentially, the most explosive flash point in Iraq is along the so-called "trigger line" of oil-rich and ethnically mixed regions—especially in and around Kirkuk and Mosul—that separate Iraqi Kurdistan in the north from the predominantly Arab areas to its south and west. Under Saddam Hussein, hundreds of thousands of Kurds were forcibly driven from these areas and replaced by Arabs. Following the U.S. occupation, the Kurdish nationalists, who control the semi-autonomous Kurdish region, sought to reverse the process, repatriating hundreds of thousands of Kurds in and around Kirkuk. Kurdish militias (the *pesh merga*) backed by U.S. troops have attacked Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs as well as the Turkmen and Christian Assyrian minorities, seizing their property and driving them out by the thousands.

AP photos

Above: U.S. troops police streets of Mosul, Iraq, in June. Below: Victim's body carried from scene of October 25 suicide bombing in Baghdad. Two bombings in the city that day killed over 150 people.

In the past year, tensions between Baghdad and Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, have heightened as Iraqi prime minister Nuri al-Maliki has sought to challenge the Kurdish nationalists' territorial ambitions (and oil claims). This included an August 2008 military foray by federal troops under al-Maliki's authority into Khanqin, a town that had been held by Kurdish *pesh merga*. Today, Iraqi politicians, unable to agree on who should be eligible to vote in Kirkuk, are deadlocked over a voting law for presidential elections scheduled for January.

The turmoil in Iraq has U.S. officials backpedaling on Obama's pledge to withdraw 70,000 troops from that country by next August. A top Pentagon official told Congress on October 21 that a postponement of the Iraqi elections "might well have implications" for the planned drawdown of U.S. troops. The *Los Angeles Times* (26 October) observed: "An increase in violence could also force President Obama to reconsider his promises to withdraw U.S. troops."

Such portrayals of the U.S. occupiers as guarantors of peace and stability in Iraq are beyond grotesque. The responsibility for the hell that has come to define life in Iraq today lies squarely with the imperialist powers. By some estimates, more than 1.2 million people have been killed in Iraq since the U.S. invasion—this on top of the 1.5 million slaughtered in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War as a result of the UN-sponsored blockade presided over by the Democratic Clinton administration. The imperialist occupation has unleashed and fostered the growth of all manner of reactionary forces in Iraqi society, from Islamic fundamentalists and rival clan leaders to virulent bourgeois nationalists. With these forces increasingly at each other's throats, the stage is set for civil war within Iraq's borders that would engender significant destabilization beyond.

Once a cultural center of the Near East and a relatively technologically sophisticated society, Iraq now lies in rubble. With the country's infrastructure demolished by the U.S. onslaught and occupation, the desperate population lacks potable water, adequate health care and, for many, sufficient food. Fully 4.7 million people—about one in six Iraqis—have been driven from their homes and are refugees within the country or abroad. Some 50,000 people, routinely denied access to their families or to lawyers, rot in prisons run by the U.S. and its Iraqi puppet regime, where gruesome tortures are routine. We say: From Guantánamo to Iraq, Afghanistan and beyond—free all the detainees!

We demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and other imperialist troops from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Just as we took a side in defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against the U.S. invaders while politically opposing the Taliban reactionaries and Saddam Hussein's bloody capitalist regime, we have a side today: against the U.S. occupiers and their allies. Insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq aim their fire at the occupiers and their lackeys, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism. However, we stand in vehement political opposition to the various clerical and nationalist forces, who, in addition to launching insurgent strikes against U.S. forces, often deliberately hit civilians.

Our call for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. and allied forces is not premised on a belief that all will be right in that region in the aftermath. Nor do we think that imperialist dominance would fail to be exerted through the more normal postcolonial channels: the sway of the major capitalist powers over the national bourgeois and religious leaders in these backward countries, who gain their social power and wealth by maintaining the wretchedness of "their" people. Rather, as the Spartacist League declared in a Political Bureau statement on the eve of the 2003 invasion of Iraq ("Defend Iraq Against U.S./British Attack!" *WV* No. 800, 28 March 2003): "Every victory for the U.S. imperialists can only encourage further military adventures. In turn, every humiliation, every setback, every defeat they suffer will serve to assist the struggles of working people and the oppressed around the globe."

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TROTSKY

LENIN

150th Anniversary of Harpers Ferry Raid

Honor John Brown

On the wet, moonless night of 16 October 1859, John Brown led an armed, multiracial band in a daring raid on Harpers Ferry in what was then Virginia. His objective was to procure arms from the federal arsenal there, free slaves in the nearby area, and, like Spartacus and Toussaint L'Ouverture before him, lead his army into the mountains where they could establish a liberated area and, if need be, wage war against the accursed slave masters. On that night, John Brown struck a blow for black freedom, a blow that reverberates even now for all who struggle for that cause.

On the 150th anniversary of the Harpers Ferry raid, comrades and friends of the Spartacist League went to North Elba, New York, where Brown is buried, to pay tribute to this heroic fighter. Our comrades sang "John Brown's Body" and the "Internationale," and laid a wreath at his gravesite, which, in the name of the Spartacist League, declared, "Finish the Civil War! For Black Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!"

Militarily, Brown's mission was a failure. But politically, Brown's raid was, as one comrade stated in a speech in North Elba, a "thunderbolt" that was heard around the country, opening the road for the Civil War that smashed slavery. As black scholar W.E.B. DuBois noted, "From the day John Brown was captured to the day he died, and after, it was the South and slavery that was on trial—not John Brown."

Brown's heroic raid galvanized both sides for the soon-to-come Second American Revolution, the Civil War of 1861-65. His opponents vilified him as a fanatical, vindictive lunatic. One of the few to rush to Brown's defense in the immediate aftermath of the raid was the American transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau. In a 30 October 1859 speech, Thoreau praised those in Brown's small army as men of "principle, of rare courage, and devoted humanity," who "alone were ready to step between the oppressor and the oppressed." Speaking of Brown himself, Thoreau declared, "It was his peculiar doctrine that a man has a perfect right to interfere by force with the slaveholder, in order to rescue the slave. I agree with him."

The Harpers Ferry raid, as much as any single act, helped to precipitate the irrepressible conflict between the industrializing bourgeoisie of the North and the agrarian-based mercantile slavocracy of the South. Karl Marx wrote to his comrade Friedrich Engels in January 1860, "In my view, the most momentous thing happening in the world today is the slave movement—on the one hand, in America, started by the death of Brown, and in Russia, on the other.... Thus, a 'social' movement has been started both in the West and in the East." Frederick Douglass, Brown's cohort in the radical wing of the abolitionist movement, said after the Civil War:

> "If John Brown did not end the war that ended slavery, he did, at least, begin the war that ended slavery. If we look over the dates, places, and men for which this honor is claimed, we shall find that not Carolina, but Virginia, not Fort Sumter, but Harpers Ferry and the arsenal, not Major Anderson, but John Brown began the war that ended American slavery."

It took the blood and iron of the Civil War, including the crucial role played by 200,000 black soldiers and sailors, to finally destroy American chattel slavery. But with the final undoing of Radical Reconstruction—a turbulent decade of interracial bourgeois democracy in the South, the most egalitarian experiment in U.S. history—the promise of black equality was betrayed by the Northern bourgeoisie. Racial oppression has always been and remains in the very marrow of American capitalism. It will take a third American revolution to burn this cancer out of the body politic and allow for the first time the full integration of black people into an egalitarian socialist America. As we said in *Black History and the Class Struggle* No. 1 (August 1983):

> "We stand in the revolutionary tradition of Frederick Douglass and John Brown. To complete the unfinished democratic tasks of the Civil War, we look to the multi-racial American working class. In this period of imperialist decay, there is no longer a radical or 'progressive' wing of the capitalist ruling class; the whole system stands squarely counterposed to black freedom. Forward to the third American Revolution, a proletarian revolution led by a Trotskyist vanguard party with a strong black leadership component. Finish the Civil War—For black liberation in a workers' America!"

We reprint below an appreciation of John Brown's life by George Novack, "Homage to John Brown," that appeared in *New International* (January 1938), published by the then-revolutionary Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party.

John Brown was a revolutionary terrorist. There was nothing alien or exotic about him; he was a genuine growth of the American soil. The roots of his family tree on both sides reached back among the first English settlers of Connecticut. The generations of Browns were pious Protestant pioneers, tough and upstanding, and singularly consistent in their ideas, characters, and ways of life. John Brown was the third fighter for freedom of that name in his family and was himself the parent of a fourth. His grandfather died in service as a captain in the Revolutionary war. His father was an active abolitionist, a station-master and conductor on the underground railway.

Born in 1800, the pattern of John Brown's first fifty years reproduced the life of his father. His father has married three times and had sixteen children; John Brown married twice and had twenty children, every living soul among them pledged to hate and fight black bondage. Like his father, John, too, was "very quick on the move," shifting around ten times in the Northeastern states before his call to Kansas. He was successively—but not very successfully—a shepherd, tanner, farmer, surveyor, cattle-expert, real estate speculator, and wool-merchant. In his restlessness, his constant change of occupation and residence, John Brown was a typical middle-class American citizen of his time.

How did this ordinary farmer and business man, this pious patriarch become transformed into a border chieftain and a revolutionary terrorist? John had inherited his family's love of liberty and his father's abolitionism. At an early age he had sworn eternal war against slavery. His barn at Richmond, Pennsylvania, where in 1825 he set up a tannery, the first of his commercial enterprises, was a station on the underground railway. Ten years later he was discussing plans for the establishment of a Negro school. "If once the Christians in the Free States would set to work in earnest in teaching the blacks," he wrote his brother, "the people of the slaveholding States would find themselves constitutionally driven to set about the work of emancipation immediately."

As the slave power tightened its grip upon the government, John Brown's views on emancipation changed radically. "A firm believer in the divine authenticity of the Bible," he drew his inspiration and guidance from the Old Testament rather than the New. He lost sympathy with the abolitionists of the Garrison school who advocated the Christ-like doctrine of non-resistance to force. He identified himself with the shepherd Gideon who led his band against the Midianites and slew them with his own hand.

A project for carrying the war into the enemy's camp had long been germinating in John Brown's mind. By establishing a stronghold in the mountains bordering Southern territory from which his men could raid the plantations, he planned to free the slaves, and run them

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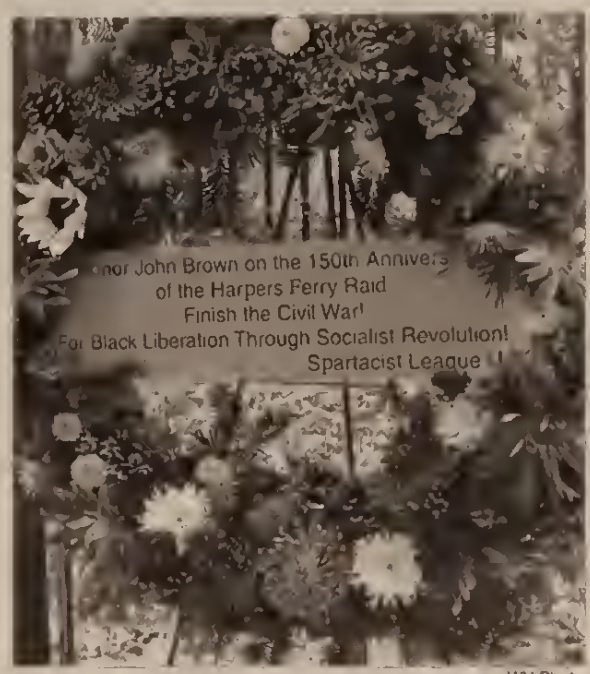
Kansas State Historical Society



WV Photo

John Brown in 1859. Spartacist League laid wreath at John Brown's grave, North Elba, NY, October 17.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Letters Policy

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On Karl Marx, Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War

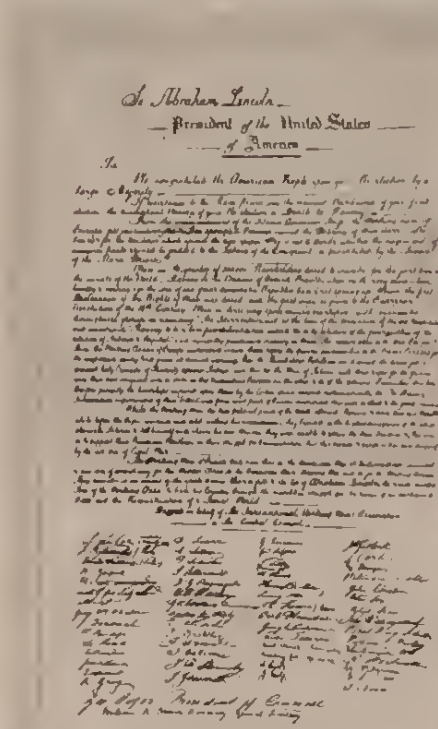
Massachusetts
30 August 2009

I had a few thoughts on your article "Honor Abraham Lincoln" (*Workers Vanguard*, No. 938). I just finished Eric Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* and reread some articles by Marx on the US Civil War. One of the things that's striking is that Marx gave what is basically (critical) political support to a capitalist party, by congratulating Lincoln on re-election (see *Karl Marx on Lincoln Re-Election*, supra). Fake socialists have a long history of looking to some supposedly progressive wing of the bourgeoisie, so it's striking when Marx himself seems to support that view, and it needs to be put in perspective.

It was essential to give military support to the North, but political support presumes that a class is performing a historically progressive role that could not be performed by a more progressive class, the proletariat. This is actually a time when the concept of a "two stage revolution" makes sense, even though the term was not used at that time. The US working class was small, unorganized and without the social weight it would possess a generation or more later. Chattel slavery was heinous in itself, but beyond that, as Marx said, "Labor cannot emancipate itself in its white skin, wherein its black it is branded." It was inconceivable that there would be an advance in the class struggle, in terms of unions, never mind socialist revolution, while slavery existed. The aftermath of the Civil War, in particular Radical Reconstruction, gave birth to labor struggles and a modest rise in socialist consciousness in the US. Reconstruction's defeat, symbolized by the withdrawal of federal troops to crush the rail strike of 1877, ended capitalism's progressive role.

Marx was also writing about the US before the experience of the Paris Commune. (I cannot find any writings by Marx or Engels dealing with Reconstruction.) Marx's writings on the US Civil War, along with radical abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and the whole thrust of Radical Reconstruction, presumed that one could use the capitalist state for progressive ends. The Paris Commune proved that false, or at least put that historical era clearly at an end. That task today can be fulfilled only by the proletariat.

Joel



John Mayall

G. Lester

Letter by Marx congratulating Lincoln on his re-election, on behalf of the International Working Men's Association, November 1864. Top: Karl Marx. Bottom: Friedrich Engels.

***WV* replies:**

The Civil War—the Second American Revolution—was the greatest event in U.S. history. By defeating the South, the industrialized system in the North uprooted the nearly 250-year-old institution of chattel slavery and paved the way for the expansion of capitalist property relations from one end of North America to the other.

Joel rightly emphasizes that the Northern ruling class in the Civil War era played a historically progressive role at a time when the small and unorganized working class lacked the social weight to supplant bourgeois rule. He concludes correctly that the class struggle, unionization and the prospect of socialist revolution could not advance as long as slavery existed.

However, Joel intimates that there is a common thread between Karl Marx's congratulations to Abraham Lincoln for his re-election to the presidency in 1864 and the reformists' political support for "liberal" bourgeois forces today: "Fake socialists have a long history of looking to some supposedly progressive wing of the bourgeoisie, so it's striking when Marx himself seems to support that view, and it needs to be put in perspective."

Marx supported Lincoln because he was a bourgeois revolutionary in a period when, as Joel himself notes, the U.S. bourgeoisie was playing "a historically progressive role that could not be performed by a more progressive class, the proletariat." Thus, this support has *nothing* whatsoever in common with the politics of today's fake socialists, whose pro-Democratic Party program helps chain workers and the oppressed to their capitalist class enemies.

Joel correctly notes that the defeat of Reconstruction "ended capitalism's progressive role." Following the Civil War, the U.S. began to play an increasingly bellicose role abroad, waging war against Korea and clashing with its European competitors over Asia, the South Pacific and the Western Hemisphere. While the Republican Party had championed the emancipation of the slaves during the Civil War and supported the great expansion of black rights during Reconstruction, it was quickly becoming the party of the big capitalists, who had little interest in the rights and advancement of black people. The years of the Grant administration saw the creation of new corporations that were, as described by Henry Adams at the time, "more powerful than a sovereign State" (quoted in "On Henry Adams and *Democracy*," *New York Review of Books*, 27 March 2003). Moreover, as we noted in Part One of "The Grant Administration (1869-1877) and the Rise of U.S. Imperialism" (*WV* No. 938, 5 June), we see in this period "shades of the imperial presidency to come." By the late 19th century, the U.S. had become an imperialist power, bringing death and destruction to subject countries such as the Philippines.

Joel suggests that the Paris Commune of 1871, the first instance of the dictatorship of the proletariat in history, showed that one could no longer use the capitalist state for progressive ends. Actually, what the Paris Commune confirmed was that the proletariat, *victorious in its social revolution*, "cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes," as Marx underlined in *The Civil War in France* (1871). What the Paris Commune showed was that the working class must smash the existing capitalist state apparatus and replace it with its own state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The real issue at hand, in the case of the U.S. Civil War, is the question of when the bourgeoisie as a class ceases to play a historically progressive role. For various historical reasons, that question played out differently in Europe and the U.S. In fact, as early as 1848, amid the European revolutions of that year, Marx skewered the conservatism of the German bourgeoisie, writing, "The German bourgeoisie developed so sluggishly, timidly and slowly that at the moment when it menacingly confronted feudalism and absolutism, it saw menacingly confronting it the proletariat and all sections of the middle class whose interests and ideas were related to those of the proletariat" ("The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution" [1848]).

The 1848 revolutions marked the period when the European bourgeoisies ceased to play a historically progressive role. Indeed, they feared the prospect of revolutionary upheaval more than the dominance of the landed nobility, and allied themselves with the aristocracy against the working and artisan masses in revolt. At the same time, the proletariat was still too weak to immediately vie for power. It was the experience of the betrayals by the bourgeoisies in the 1848 revolutions that led Marx to emphasize the necessity of organizing the proletariat in a party independent of all other classes.

In the case of the U.S., as Joel himself notes, the working class could not play an independent role so long as the institution of slavery continued to exist. The North's momentous suppression of the slaveholders' rebellion gave great impetus to the industrialization of the country and fostered the development of the proletariat—capitalism's gravedigger. The Civil War and Reconstruction represented the last progressive acts of the U.S. bourgeoisie.

Joel asserts that the period of the Civil War—including Marx's support to Lincoln—"is actually a time when the concept of a 'two stage revolution' makes sense, even though the term was not used at that time." However, this poses the question in an ahistorical manner. Marx was not working within the framework of "two stage revolution." To the contrary, for Marx, the Civil War was not the first stage of a revolution whose sequel would bring the working class to power but the culmination of the bourgeois revolution. The dogma of "two stage revolution," as originally developed for tsarist Russia, held that because Russia was a backward country that had not yet undergone a bourgeois-democratic revolution, a bourgeois republic was necessary to achieve modernization and prepare the proletariat for taking power. But by the time the two-stage conception appeared on the scene, capitalism was no longer capable of playing a historically progressive role.

Discussing this stagist strategy, Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky remarked: "The Menshevik idea of the alliance of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie actually signified the subjection to the liberals of both the workers and the peasants" ("Three Conceptions of the Russian Revolution" [1939]). All manner of Stalinists and fake socialists have sought to justify their "two stage" betrayals of the proletariat by pointing to Marx's support to Lincoln and other similar instances. From the Mensheviks' support to bourgeois liberalism during the 1917 Russian Revolution to the defeats of the Second Chinese Revolution in the late 1920s and the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s, the two-stage framework has always been a straitjacket for the working class and a program for bloody counterrevolution.

Everything depends on time, place and circumstance, as Engels was fond of saying. In contrast to the Republican Party of the early 1860s, which fought to uproot black chattel slavery, the capitalist Republican and Democratic Parties today are the gendarmes of world reaction. Imperialism can be put out of business only by a series of working-class revolutions that overthrow capitalism, expropriate the bourgeoisie and prepare the way for a communist future for all of humanity. We struggle to build internationalist revolutionary parties dedicated to that goal. ■

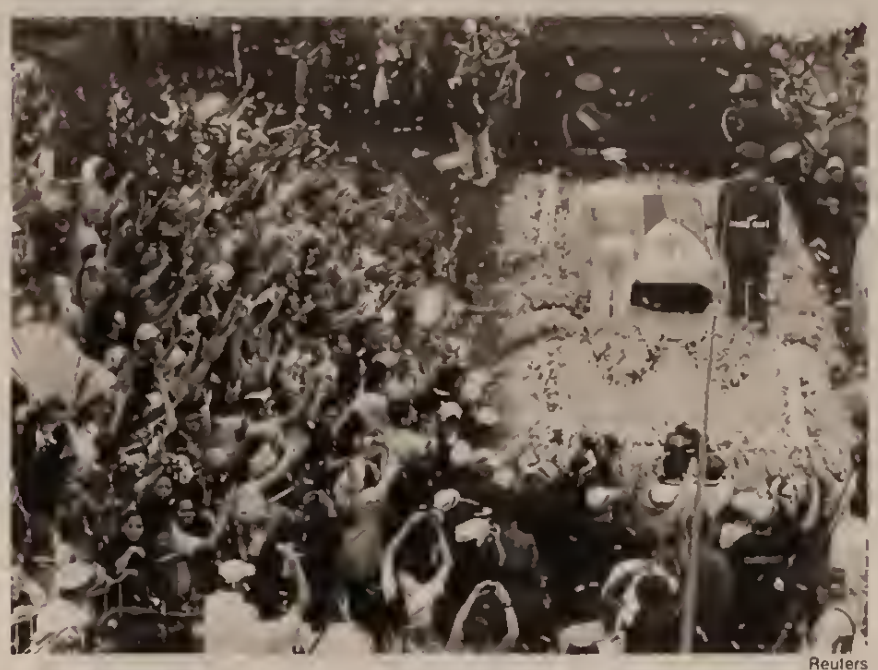
CORRECTION

A photo used in the article "Down With the Clerical Regime! No Support to 'Reform' Mullahs!" (*WV* No. 939, 3 July) was incorrectly identified as an "Iranian woman being prepared for execution by stoning, 2004." While the image illustrates the horror often visited upon women in Iran by the theocratic regime, it has been brought to our attention by a subscriber that the picture, which we also incorrectly credited to Amnesty International, was a still from the 1994 Dutch film *De Steen* (*The Stone*).

In investigating how we ended up violating our stringent standards on photo verification and fact-checking in running this image, we learned that it had been used in 2007 by right-wing ideologue David Horowitz. As someone commented at the time on the liberal blog "Sadly, No!": "Doesn't anyone on the right source check? I said it before and now I'll say it again...Sweet Zombie Jesus, that just DUMB!!" Us, too. We apologize to our readers for the error.

Philippines

Aquino Funeral and the Left



Reuters

Manila, August 5: Funeral procession of former Philippine president Corazon Aquino. Philippine reformist left obscenely mourned "Tita Cory."

No Illusions in Bourgeois Liberals—For Workers Revolution!

On August 1, the Philippines woke to the news that former president Corazon "Cory" C. Aquino succumbed to colon cancer. Aquino, who was catapulted to the presidency of this Far Eastern U.S. neocolony by "peaceful revolution," is deeply revered in bourgeois circles that have elevated her to near cult status as an icon of "democracy and freedom."

The late Cory Aquino was a member of the old landed aristocracy which has dominated Filipinos for centuries, both under Spanish and American colonial rule and following independence in July 1946. She assumed office in February 1986 during the so-called "People Power Revolution," a misnomer for the combination of a U.S.-engineered military revolt and massive street demonstrations encouraged by the Roman Catholic hierarchy and big business to send the hated dictator Ferdinand Marcos packing.

It is hardly surprising that Aquino's supposedly nonviolent "People Power" movement serves as a blueprint for the "color-coded revolutions" spawned by Washington from the Ukraine to Lebanon. When the U.S. pulled the plug on Marcos, who had become a liability to stability in the country, we said "Beware of coups 'Made in U.S.A.'" ("Reagan Pulls Plug on Marcos," *WV* No. 398, 28 February 1986).

Cory Aquino's "revolution" did not bring the Philippine working masses any closer to power. Instead, it was, as described by *Der Spiegel* (7 July 1986) journalist Tiziano Terzani, "the reinstatement of the old aristocratic oligarchy of Spanish descent, with which Marcos clashed and which he partly replaced by his own clique of relatives and hangers-on." For example, when the wealthy and powerful Lopez family dynasty fell out of Marcos's favor, it was stripped of most of its political and economic assets. Following Aquino's rise to power, it got back its television stations and ownership stake in the country's largest power utility.

A devout Catholic, Aquino promulgated the 1987 Constitution, which includes one of the most severe anti-abortion laws in the world. A hard anti-communist, Aquino was a staunch supporter of a strong American imperialist military presence in the Philippines. In the face of domestic political opposition, she unsuccessfully tried at the end of her presidency to maintain U.S. operation of the huge Subic Bay naval base. But the American military remains a potent combat force and continuous presence in the Philippines through rotating military exercises. All U.S. troops out of the Philippines!

The Philippines was seen by imperialist planners as an unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Cold War offensive against the former Soviet Union and in the hot war against the Vietnamese Revolution, as it is in a strategic location to serve as a military staging ground and supply base as well as to guard the sea lanes along the western Pacific Rim. It still serves a similar purpose today, with the current U.S. military encirclement and provocations aimed chiefly at China and North Korea. As part of our struggle against imperialism and in defense of working people and the oppressed around the globe, we stand for the unconditional military defense of the Chinese, North Korean, Vietnamese and Cuban bureaucratically deformed workers states against imperialist attack and capitalist counterrevolution. At the same time, we fight for proletarian political revolutions to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies and establish regimes based on workers democracy and revolutionary internationalist policies.

The Persistence of "Yellow Fever"

According to bourgeois observers in the Philippines, Cory Aquino's death could not have been more timely. The former president, a vocal opponent of the current regime, passed away while the highly unpopular right-wing president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was in Washington to curry favor from President Barack Obama. The highly publicized refusal by the Aquino family of a state-sponsored funeral and the cold reception given President Arroyo during the wake laid bare to the population the deep factional divisions within the Filipino bourgeoisie, as the country prepares for national elections in May 2010. Arroyo, the daughter of a former Philippine president, has been suspected of rigging the 2004 election in her favor. Her husband Mike, a member of the oligarchy, has been accused of amassing kickbacks for state-sponsored projects and showering cronies with perks, much to the displeasure of the Makati-centered bourgeoisie, sections of the clergy and the general population.

As Cory Aquino lay in the hospital, the powerful Roman Catholic church and Aquino supporters in the media were exhorting Filipinos to join in prayers for her recovery while yellow ribbons—the symbol of Cory's "People Power" movement—festooned the major avenues and buildings around the capital, Manila. From her sickbed, Aquino gave a final statement in support of thousands of demonstrators gathered in the nearby Makati Central Business District, many of them mobilized by the Philippine left, to protest Arroyo's attempts to get the Philippine Congress to rubber-stamp her proposed changes in the constitution that would consolidate her hold on political power.

The announcement of Aquino's death touched off a massive emotional outpouring, even among the plebeian masses of Manila and key cities around the country. Business ground to a halt as the capitalist bosses joined white-collar employees in the Makati financial district to salute the funeral cortege in a blizzard of yellow confetti streaming down from surrounding high rises. A quarter million Filipinos waving yellow flowers, chanting "Cory" and flashing the thumb and index finger "L" sign (for "Laban," meaning "Fight") came out for the funeral procession, which took nine hours to wind through the storm-drenched streets of Manila. These televised scenes, exclusively carried by the Lopez-owned ABS-CBN network, were eerily reminiscent of the funeral march for Cory Aquino's husband, Benigno "Ninoy" Jr., a millionaire bourgeois politician with close ties to the CIA, who was assassinated by agents of the Marcos regime in August 1983. That event sparked the bourgeois-led "People Power" movement that brought Cory Aquino to power a few years later with U.S. backing.

Acid Test for the Philippine Left

Like the first Aquino funeral over 25 years ago, the second Aquino funeral graphically displayed the Philippine reformist left in the political tow of the bourgeoisie. Obscenely, the Philippine left in general has lined up behind the ghost of "Tita (Auntie) Cory."

The social-democratic Akbayan party, which includes numerous ex-Stalinists, is the most prominent in the yellow-shirted political milieu. Its political predecessors cheered Cory Aquino's rise to power in 1986. Today, they are loyal drumbeaters for the Liberal Party of Senator Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, who has emerged as Liberal presidential standard-bearer in the wake of the massive turnout and media hype during his mother's funeral. Akbayan has since formed a bloc with smaller bourgeois opposition parties and so-called "civil society" organizations to support "Noynoy," whom these reformists describe as "a symbol to a nation yearning for unity and greatness."

The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)—through the National Democratic Front (NDF)—eulogized Aquino as "an outstanding and inspiring figure in the anti-fascist alliance" who was "willing to join up with the patriotic and progressive forces of the people in mass protest actions." The CPP-led guerrilla insurgency by the New People's Army (NPA) is in its 40th year. Ever since Aquino became president, the NDF umbrella political arm has been engaged in on-and-off peace negotiations with the government.

Born to the Cojuangco clan, Cory Aquino promised to make the family-owned Hacienda Luisita sugar estate a model of land reform, but she later reneged. Upon taking power, Aquino responded to popular expectations and enormous social turmoil with bloody repression. She presided over the military's mass killing of peasants in Lupao in Nueva Ecija province and outside the Malacañang presidential palace itself. She then unleashed rural death squads like the Alsa Masa (Mass Uprising) in a "total war" against the CPP and other leftists. In November 2004, Hacienda Luisita again captured headlines when heavily armed police and soldiers, backed by armored personnel carriers, attacked strikers affiliated with the Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), a labor federation aligned with the reformist left Bayan Muna (Nation First) party, killing seven, including a child, and wounding hundreds.

Despite having borne the brunt of repression, the CPP has absolved Aquino of the string of atrocities committed against the working people during her six-year term in office. The bloodiest of these attacks was the suppression of the 22 January 1987 demonstration for land reform, when Filipino cops and Marines fired pointblank into the march, killing 18 peasant protesters and their leftist supporters and wounding nearly a hundred, just outside the presidential palace. The CPP and its allies in the leftist umbrella group Bayan initially denounced Aquino. But in their pursuit of class collaboration, they soon began to alibi her. Bayan declared she was not "directly" responsible for this massacre by the military and police.

For the likes of Satur Ocampo, a Representative in the Philippine Congress who was once a senior cadre of the NDF, it's all just comrades' blood under the

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AP

Manila, January 1987: Peasants demanding land were massacred by Aquino government's troops.

UAW Tops Roll Over as Bosses Ax NUMMI Auto Plant

From a Former Fremont Auto Worker

Oakland
26 August 2009

Dear *Workers Vanguard*,

On August 20, I went with another member of the Labor Black League for Social Defense to a rally at the UAW [United Auto Workers] Local 2244 union hall in Fremont, California, called to save jobs at the NUMMI auto plant that GM and Toyota are shutting down. At the rally start time, the crowd was mainly retirees and a handful of union officials and their families. By about 1:30 p.m., people began marching in a picket line demonstration in front of the union hall, which we joined in order to distribute *Workers Vanguard* and talk with protesters. Day-shift workers were still on the job while we were there, but after a while some UAW swing-shift workers joined the rally, as did a handful of low-level bureaucrats from the SEIU health care union.

With everyone marching in the street and rally organizers working from the retirees' office, the main union hall was eerily vacant. Not even chairs or a podium were set up. I had gone into the hall to revisit the site of mass meetings in 1981-1982 of my old union, UAW Local 1364. Back then, the UAW Militant Caucus was arguing for a sit-down strike to save our jobs when GM, then the plant's owner, planned to close it and shift production to plants in the East. As we said at the time, a sit-down strike at Fremont could have sparked an industry-wide struggle, including similar actions across the country, and pointed the way for millions of desperate workers fed up with layoffs and concessions.

Since the Militant Caucus (originally named the Committee for a Militant UAW) was formed in 1973, we had fought to build a class-struggle leadership of the union and to mobilize the union economically and politically against our class enemies, the auto companies and their political parties, the Democrats and Republicans. We demanded jobs for all through a shorter workweek with no loss in pay to combat layoffs and unemployment, as a part of a broader struggle to do away with the boom-and-bust cycle by expropriating the capitalists and bringing the working class to power. We took on the pro-capitalist labor bureaucracy, whose ties to the Democratic Party subordinate the union to the capitalists.

In a leaflet we put out before the plant finally closed in 1982, we pointed out that, in contrast to the worthless con game of appeals to the company, Congressmen and mayors, "There is only one real answer to GM and that is to use the power of the union before that power is taken away by putting us out on the street. GM cares a lot more about their machinery than about us and our families." By occupying the capitalists' factories, auto workers nationally could have forced concessions from the capitalists instead.

As I stood alone now in the cavernous hall, I remembered speaking for our caucus at a contentious meeting of hundreds of union members in late 1981. When we called for a sit-down strike, it struck a real chord, especially among a small number of very experienced workers who took up the call and fought for it. Local 1364's union bureaucrats countered with the argument that these tactics were OK in the 1930s but were now illegal, and union members needed instead to get out the vote for the Democrats. Unfortunately, the bureaucracy's fearmongering and defeatism prevailed. In all, close to 6,000 auto workers from the Fremont plant were laid off and thrown onto the streets of Reagan's America.

The UAW International had negotiated an agreement with GM that high seniority laid-off Fremont auto workers would be offered assembly-line work in GM plants around the country if positions became vacant (which was unlikely during a recession). But if these older family men couldn't leave the state, all their separation benefits were cut off. In the immediate aftermath of the plant closure about a dozen older union brothers died, some from heart attacks, some by suicide.

It certainly struck me that now, in 2009, there was no debate in the union hall over the strategy of fighting against the plant closure by mobilizing the power of labor independently from the capitalists. When GM and Toyota opened NUMMI in 1984, the UAW dissolved Local 1364, which had earned a reputation for militancy over the years. Hiring at NUMMI was not done according to Local 1364 seniority. Instead a new union, Local 2244, was formed. Individuals who had been part of Local 1364's bureaucracy initially worked in NUMMI's personnel office to assist management with the hiring/screening process of former GM workers. (I always suspected that they were screening out the militants.) The UAW bureaucracy's line since 1984 that NUMMI represented a new partnership between labor and capital—"team spirit"—has now borne rotten fruit during an economic recession far worse than when the Fremont GM plant closed in 1982.

I left the empty union hall to talk with demonstrators outside. Many agreed with the view in *WV* that labor should not have to pay for the financial crisis of capitalism and were also interested in *WV*'s call to break with the Democrats and build a workers party. But the only strategy the bureaucracy offered was class collaboration: expressing the union's loyalty to NUMMI and appealing to the Democratic Party state legislators to give NUMMI incentives to remain open. A union statement pleaded: "This membership has brought the efficiency of the Toyota Production System, a model of lean manufacturing and unique Labor and Management relations to the U.S.A." It went on to declare the need to "reach out" to "local, state, and federal legislators and lawmakers."

The union protesters were doing their best to put a militant face on what was offered by the bureaucracy, chanting and marching in the hot sun. The bureaucrats corrupted a popular union chant, "Everywhere we go, people want to know, who we are—We are the union, the mighty, mighty union!" to say: "We are NUMMI, mighty, mighty NUMMI!" The union flyer for the rally shared its masthead with NUMMI's logo. It explicitly stated, "Thursday's Rally is NOT about the UAW or the current contract negotiations" and called for "Union or Management, Contractor or Supplier" to participate and "join together to continue building on our 25-year legacy of quality at NUMMI." The union T-shirt read: "Toyotas sold here should be made here."

As the demonstration got larger, the marching stopped and everyone gathered up in order to become an audience for union bureaucrats. Democratic Party

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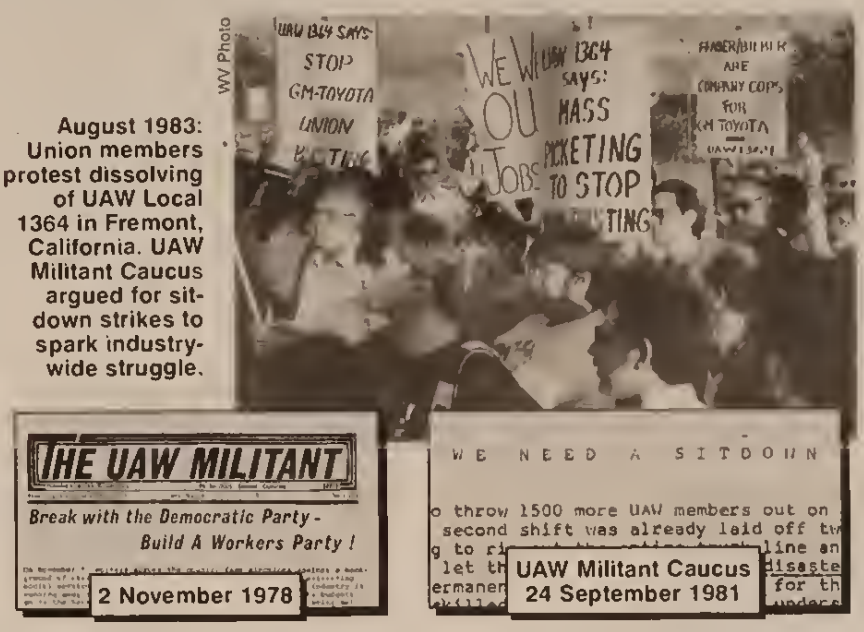


August 1983: Union members protest dissolving of UAW Local 1364 in Fremont, California. UAW Militant Caucus argued for sit-down strikes to spark industry-wide struggle.

Victory Over "War on Terror" Frame-Up on the Docks

The working class won a small, but important, victory on October 28 when Bay Area longshoreman Jason Ruffin won a resounding "not guilty" verdict after a three-day trial on trumped-up charges of resisting arrest. In August 2007, Ruffin and fellow Bay Area longshoreman Aaron Harrison, both black, were returning to work at the Port of Sacramento after lunch when they were stopped by security guards who demanded to search their car, citing the maritime security regulations that are part of the government's "war on terror." While the two longshoremen were phoning their International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 business agent for advice, the guards called in the notoriously racist West Sacramento police. The police pepper-sprayed Harrison, forced the two from their car, and then handcuffed and threw them in jail on charges of resisting arrest, obstructing a police officer and trespassing (the latter charge was dropped).

For over two years, the vindictive Yolo County district attorney has been dragging Ruffin and Harrison through the courts, determined to uphold the cops' prerogatives under draconian "war on terror" security regulations. A nine-day trial of both longshoremen ended in a hung jury in January and Ruffin and Harrison's cases were subsequently separated. During jury selection for Ruffin's trial, the judge and the D.A. tried to screen out any jurors with pro-union sympathies while dismissing others who spoke of their own negative experiences with the West Sacramento cops. But even after this selection process (out of a jury pool that included only *one* black person!), the frame-up of Ruffin was so blatant that the jury acquitted him.

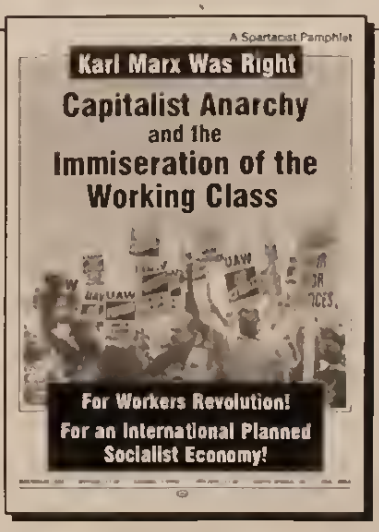
Aaron Harrison's trial is scheduled to begin November 12. The ILWU and other supporters of the two victimized longshoremen should not be lulled into thinking that Ruffin's victory guarantees a similar outcome for Harrison. As the driver of the car, he was especially targeted by the cops, who reached in and pepper-sprayed him in the face while he was still behind the wheel! Harrison faces a maximum sentence of one year in the county jail. Harrison, like Ruffin, has stood firm in defense of union rights and against the court's campaign to brand him a criminal.

At court hearings for the two in 2007 and 2008, Local 10 organized rallies at the Yolo County Courthouse that included other unionists from the Bay Area and the Sacramento area. In June, the ILWU's coastwide Longshore Division Caucus voted to contribute $100,000 toward Harrison and Ruffin's defense. Now the union needs to mobilize a strong show of support for Harrison on the opening day of his trial.

As the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—wrote in a July 16 protest letter to the Yolo County D.A.:

> "The persecution of these two union members places them on the front line of the defense of labor and immigrant workers against the government's attacks under the so-called 'port security' laws. The Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC), implemented at West Coast ports this past spring as part of a 'national security' program, vastly increases the government's ability to ride roughshod over workers on the docks. It is in the direct interest of dockworkers and the labor movement to defend Harrison and Ruffin as part of the defense of the entire working class."

Mobilize to ensure that Harrison, like Ruffin, beats back this racist, anti-union frame-up! Drop the charges against Aaron Harrison!



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John Brown...

(continued from page 2)

off to Canada. On a tour to Europe in 1851 he inspected fortifications with an eye to future use; he carefully studied military tactics, especially of guerrilla warfare in mountainous territory. Notebooks on his reading are still extant.

However, his first assaults upon the slave power were to be made, not from the mountains of Maryland and West Virginia, but on the plains of Kansas. In the spring of 1855 his four eldest sons had emigrated to Kansas to settle there and help win the territory for the free-soil party. In May John Brown, Jr., sent the following urgent appeal to his father. "While the interest of despotism has secured to its cause hundreds and thousands of the meanest and most desperate of men, armed to the teeth...thoroughly organized...under pay from Slave-holders,—the friends of freedom are ***not one fourth*** of them ***half armed***, and as to ***Military Organization*** among them it ***no where exists in the territory***..." with the result "that the people here exhibit the most abject and cowardly spirit.... We propose...that the anti-slavery portion of the inhabitants should ***immediotely, thoroughly*** arm, and ***organize themselves*** in ***military companies***. In order to effect this, some persons must begin and lead in the matter. Here are 5 men of us who are not only anxious to fully prepare, but are thoroughly determined to fight. We can see no other way to meet the case. 'It is no longer a question of negro slavery, but it is the enslavement of ourselves.' We want you to get for us these arms. We need them more than we do bread...."

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly

John Brown with his dying sons as Robert E. Lee's troops break into his stronghold at Harpers Ferry, 1859.

Having already resolved to join his children in Kansas, John Brown needed no second summons. In the next few months he collected considerable supplies of arms and sums of money from various sympathetic sources, including several cases of guns belonging to the state of Ohio, which were "spirited away" for his use. In August he set out for Kansas from Chicago in a one-horse wagon loaded with guns and ammunition.

Upon arriving in Ossawatomie, John Brown became the captain of the local militia company and led it in the bloodless "Wakarusa War." Then he plunged into the thick of the struggle for the possession of the territory that gave it the name of "Bleeding Kansas." In retaliation for the sacking of Lawrence by the Border Ruffians, Brown's men, including four of his sons, slaughtered five pro-slavery sympathizers in a night raid near Pottawatomie Creek. Brown took full responsibility for these killings; he fought according to the scriptural injunction: "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

Reprisals on one side bred reprisals on the other. The settlement at Ossawatomie was pillaged and burned; Brown's son, Frederick, killed; his forces beaten and scattered. Thereafter John Brown and his band were outlaws, living on the run, giving the slip to government troops, launching sudden raids upon the pro-slavery forces. John Brown became a power in Kansas. His name equaled "an army with banners" in the eyes of the militant Free-Soil colonists; the whisper of his presence sufficed to break up pro-slavery gatherings. He continued his guerrilla warfare throughout 1856 until Kansas was pacified by the Federal troops.

His experiences in Kansas completed the transformation of John Brown into a revolutionist. "John Brown is a natural production, born on the soil of Kansas, out of the germinating heats the great contest on the soil of that territory engendered," wrote J.S. Pike, the Washington correspondent of the *New York Tribune* after the Harper's Ferry raid. "Before the day of Kansas outrages and oppression no such person as Ossawatomie Brown existed. No such person could have existed. He was born of rapine and cruelty and murder.... Kansas deeds, Kansas experiences, Kansas discipline created John Brown as entirely and completely as the French Revolution created Napoleon Bonaparte. He is as much the fruit of Kansas as Washington was the fruit of our own Revolution."

* * *

Between 1856 and 1858, John Brown shuttled back and forth between Kansas and the East seeking support for the struggle against the Border Ruffians. He received supplies, arms, and moral encouragement from many noted abolitionists, such as Gerrit Smith, the New York philanthropist, and numerous members of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee, T.W. Higginson, Theodore Parker, etc. But there was no place for John Brown in the condition of armed neutrality that reigned in Kansas after 1856.

No longer needed in Kansas, John Brown reverted to his long cherished scheme of mountain warfare. To prepare for his enterprise he called a convention of his followers and free Negroes at Chatham in Canada and outlined his plans to them. One of the members of the convention reported that, after invoking the example of Spartacus, of Toussaint L'Ouverture, and other historical heroes who had fled with their followers into the mountains and there defied and defeated the expeditions of their adversaries, Brown said that "upon the first intimation of a plan formed for the liberation of the slaves, they would immediately rise all over the Southern States. He supposed they would come into the mountains to join him...and that we should be able to establish ourselves in the fastnesses, and if any hostile action (as would he) were taken against us, either by the militia of the separate states or by the armies of the United States, we purposed to defeat first the militia, and next, if it was possible, the troops of the United States, and then organize the freed blacks under the provisional constitution, which would carve out for the locality of its jurisdiction all that mountainous region in which the blacks were to be established and in which they were to be taught the useful and mechanical arts, and to be instructed in all the business of life.... The Negroes were to constitute the soldiers."

The revolutionary spirit of the constitution adopted by the convention for this projected Free State can be judged from this preamble: "Whereas, Slavery, throughout its entire existence in the United States is none other than a most barbarous, unprovoked, and unjustifiable War of one portion of its citizens upon another portion; the only conditions of which are perpetual imprisonment, and hopeless servitude or absolute extermination; in utter disregard and violation of the eternal and self-evident truths set forth in our Declaration of Independence: *Therefore*, we citizens of the United States, and the oppressed people, who, by a recent decision of the Supreme Court are declared to have no rights which the White Man is bound to respect, together with all other people degraded by the laws thereof, do, for the time being, ordain and establish for ourselves the following provisional Constitution and ordinances, the better to protect our persons, property, lives, and liberties; and to govern our actions." John Brown was elected Commander-in-Chief under this Constitution.

For all its daring, John Brown's scheme was hopeless from every point of view and predestined to fail. Its principal flaws were pointed out beforehand by Hugh Forbes, one of his critical adherents. In the first place, "no preparatory notice having been given to the slaves...the invitation to rise might, unless they were already in a state of agitation, meet with no response, or a feeble one." Second, even if successful such a sally "would at most be a mere local explosion...and would assuredly be suppressed." Finally, John Brown's dream of a Northern Convention of his New England partisans which would restore tranquility and overthrow the pro-slavery administration was "a settled fallacy. Brown's New England friends would not have the courage to show themselves so long as the issue was doubtful." Forbes' predictions were fulfilled to the letter.

Convinced that "God had created him to be the deliverer of slaves the same as Moses had delivered the children of Israel," Brown overrode these objections and proceeded to mobilize his forces. Before he could put his plan into operation, however, he was compelled to return to Kansas for the last time, where, under the *nom de guerre* of Shubel Morgan, he led a raid upon some plantations across the Missouri border, killing a planter and setting eleven slaves at liberty. Both the Governor of Kansas and the President of the United States offered rewards for his arrest. With a price of $3,000 on his head, John Brown fled to Canada with the freedmen.

Early in the summer of 1859 a farm was rented about five miles from Harper's Ferry. There John Brown collected his men and prepared for his coup. On the night of October 16 they descended upon Harper's Ferry; took possession of the United States armories; imprisoned a number of the inhabitants; and persuaded a few slaves to join them. By noon militia companies arrived from nearby Charlestown and blocked his only road to escape. The next night a company of United States marines commanded by Col. Robert E. Lee appeared, and, at dawn, when Brown refused to surrender, stormed the engine-house in which Brown, his surviving men, and his prisoners were barricaded. Fighting with matchless coolness and courage over the body of his dying son, he was overpowered and arrested.

Ten men had been killed or mortally wounded, among them two of Brown's own sons, and eleven captured in the assault.

The reporter of the *New York Herald* describes the scene during his cross-examination. "In the midst of enemies, whose home he had invaded; wounded, a prisoner, surrounded by a small army of officials, and a more desperate army of angry men; with the gallows staring him full in the face, he lay on the floor, and, in reply to every question, gave answers that betokened the spirit that animated him." John Brown steadfastly insisted that a sin-

Kansas State Historical Society

Kansas Free State battery poised for battle, 1856. John Brown and sons joined fight against extension of slavery to Kansas.

Frederick Douglass House

Frederick Douglass, revolutionary abolitionist.

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gle purpose was behind all his actions: to free the Negroes, "the greatest service a man can render to God." A bystander interrogated: "Do you consider yourself an instrument in the hands of Providence?"—"I do."—"Upon what principle do you justify your acts?"—"Upon the golden rule. I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them; that is why I am here; not to gratify my personal animosity, revenge, or vindictive spirit. It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you and as precious in the sight of God."

Indicted for "treason to the Commonwealth" and "conspiring with slaves to commit treason and murder," John Brown was promptly tried by a state court and sentenced to death.

During his stay in prison John Brown rose to the most heroic heights. His dignified bearing, his kindliness won his jailors, his captors, and his judges. His letters from the prison where he awaited execution were imbued with the same resolute determination and calm, conscious acceptance of his sacrifice in the cause of freedom, as the letters of Bartholomeo Vanzetti, his fellow revolutionist. To friends who contemplated his rescue, he answered: "I am worth infinitely more to die than to live." To another he wrote: "I do not feel conscious of guilt in taking up arms; and had it been in behalf of the rich and powerful, the intelligent, the great—as men count greatness—of those who form enactments to suit themselves and corrupt others, or some of their friends, that I interfered, suffered, sacrificed and fell, it would have been doing very well.... These light afflictions which endure for a moment shall work out for me *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*.... God will surely attend to his own cause in the best possible way and time, and he will not forget the work of his own hands."

Bettmann

Library of Congress

Left: Scarred back of slave. Nearly 200,000 blacks volunteered for Union Army and Navy, helping to turn tide in Civil War and defeat Southern slavocracy. Right: 4th U.S. Colored Infantry at Fort Lincoln.

On December 2, 1859, a month after his sentence, fifteen hundred soldiers escorted John Brown to the scaffold in the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains which had for so many years held out to him the promise of freedom for the slaves. With a single blow of the sheriff's hatchet, he "hung between heaven and earth," the first American executed for treason. The silence was shattered by the speech of the commander in charge. "So perish all such enemies of Virginia! All such enemies of the Union. All such foes of the human race!"

* * *

"Let those.. who have reproaches to heap upon the authors of the Harper's Ferry bloody tumult and general Southern fright, go back to the true cause of it all. Let them not blame blind and inevitable instruments in the work, nor falsely malign those who are in nowise implicated, directly or indirectly; but let them patiently investigate the true source whence this demonstration arose, and then bestow their curses and anathemas accordingly. It is childish and absurd for Governor Wise to seize and sit astride the wounded panting body of Old Brown, and think he has got the villain who set this mischief on foot. By no means. The head conspirators against the peace of Virginia are ex-President Franklin Pierce and Senator Douglas. These are the parties he should apprehend, confine, and try for causing this insurrection. Next to them he should seize upon Senators Mason and Hunter of Virginia, as accessories. Let him follow up by apprehending every supporter of the Nebraska Bill, and when he shall have brought them all to condign punishment, he will have discharged his duty, but not till then....

"Old Brown is simply a spark of a great fire kindled by shortsighted mortals.... There is no just responsibility resting anywhere, no just attribution of causes anywhere, for this violent attempt that does not fall directly upon the South itself. It has deliberately challenged and wantonly provoked the elements that have concentred and exploded." So wrote the same journalist whose characterization of John Brown we have already quoted.

Little needs to be added to this historical judgment made in the midst of the events. The Compromisers who attempted to fasten slavery forever upon the American people against their will, and the representatives of slaveholders who prompted them were, in the last analysis, responsible for the raid upon Harper's Ferry.

John Brown expected the shock of his assault to electrify the slaves and frighten the slaveholders into freeing their chattels. His experiment in emancipation ended in complete catastrophe. Instead of weakening slavery, his raid temporarily fortified the pro-slavery forces by consolidating their ranks, intensifying their repression, and stiffening their resistance.

John Brown was misled by the apparent effectiveness of his terrorist activities in Kansas. He did not understand that there his raids and reprisals were an integral part of the open struggle of the Free-Soil settlers against the invasion of the slaveholder's Hessians, and were accessory and subordinate factors in deciding that protracted contest. That violence alone was impotent to determine its outcome was demonstrated by the failure of the Border Ruffians to impose slavery upon the territory.

John Brown's attempt to impose emancipation upon the South by an exclusive reliance upon terrorist methods met with equal failure. Other ways and means were necessary to release, amplify, and control the revolutionary forces capable of overthrowing the slave power and abolishing slavery.

Yet John Brown's raid was not wholly reactionary in its effects. His blow against slavery reverberated throughout the land and inspired those who were to follow him. The news of his bold deed rang like a fire-bell in the night, arousing the nation and setting its nerves on edge. Through John Brown the coming civil war entered into the nerves of the people many months before it was exhibited in their ideas and actions.

The South took alarm. The "acts of the assassin" confirmed their fears of slave-insurrection provoked by the Northern abolitionists and Black Republicans. Brown's personal connections with many prominent abolitionists were undeniable, and their disclaimers of connivance and their disapprobation of his actions did not make them any less guilty in the slaveowner's eyes, but only more cowardly and hypocritical. The slaveholders were convinced that their enemies were now taking the offensive in a direct armed attack upon their lives, their homes, their property. "The conviction became common in the South," says Frederic Bancroft, the biographer of Seward, "that John Brown differed from the majority of the Northerners merely in the boldness and desperateness of his methods."

The majority of official opinion in the North condemned John Brown's "criminal enterprise" and justified his execution. Big Unionist meetings exploited the incident for the benefit of the Democratic Party. The *Richmond Enquirer* of October 25, 1859, noted with satisfaction that the conservative pro-slavery press of the North "evinces a determination to make the moral of the Harper's invasion an effective weapon to rally all men not fanatics against the party whose leaders have been implicated directly with the midnight murder of Virginia citizens and the destruction of government property." The Republican leaders, a little less directly but no less decisively, hastened to denounce the deed and throw holy water over the execution. Said Lincoln: "We cannot object to the execution," and Seward echoed, "it was necessary and just."

But many thousands rallied to John Brown's side, hailing him as a martyr in the cause of emancipation. The radical abolitionists spoke up most boldly in his behalf and most correctly assayed the significance of his life and death. At John Brown's funeral service, Wendell Phillips spoke these words: "Marvelous old man!... He has abolished slavery in Virginia.... True, the slave is still there. So, when the tempest uproots a pine on your hills, it looks green for months—a year or two. Still, it is timber, not a tree. John Brown has loosened the roots of the slave system; it only breathes—it does not live—hereafter." Longfellow wrote in his diary on the day of the hanging: "This will be a great day in our history; the date of a new Revolution—quite as much needed as the old one. Even now as I write, they are leading old John Brown to execution in Virginia for attempting to rescue slaves! This is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind, which will come soon."

Finally, Frank P. Stearns, a Boston merchant who had contributed generously to John Brown's Kansas campaign, declared before the Senatorial Investigating Committee: "I should have disapproved of it [the raid] if I had known of it; but I have since changed my opinion: I believe John Brown to be the representative man of the century, as Washington was of the last—the Harper's Ferry affair, and the capacity shown by the Italians for self-government, the great events of this age. One will free Europe and the other America."

On his way to the scaffold John Brown handed this last testament to a friend. "I John Brown am now quite *certain* that the crimes of this *guilty land*: will never be purged *away*; but with blood. I had as *I now think: vainly* flattered myself that without *very much* bloodshed it might be done." His prophetic previsions were soon to be realized.

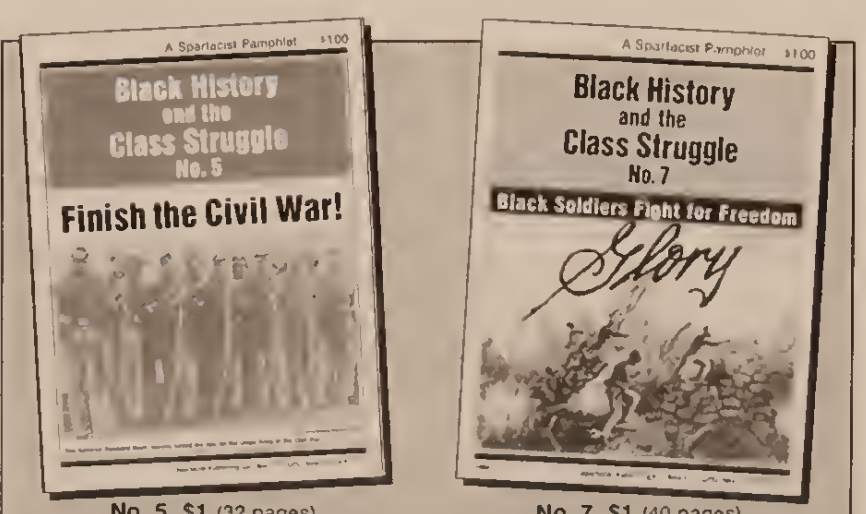
A year and a half after his execution, John Brown's revolutionary spirit was resurrected in the Massachusetts volunteers, who marched through the streets of Boston, singing the battle hymn that four of them had just improvised: "John Brown's body." Their movements were open and legal; John Brown's actions had been hidden and treasonable. Yet the marching men proudly acknowledged their communion with him, as they left for Virginia.

There the recent defenders of the Union had become disrupters of the Union; the punishers of treason themselves traitors; the hangmen of rebels themselves in open rebellion. John Brown's captor, Robert E. Lee, had already joined the Confederate army he was to command. Ex-Governor Wise, who had authorized Brown's hanging, was conspiring, like him, to seize Harper's Ferry arsenal, and, as a crowning irony, exhorted his neighbors at Richmond to emulate John Brown: "Take a lesson from John Brown, manufacture your blades from old iron, even though it be the ties of your cart-wheels."

Thus the opposing forces in the historical process, that John Brown called God, each in their own way, paid homage to the father of the Second American Revolution.■

WV Photo

Labor Black League banner at thousands-strong demonstration to stop the Klan in New York City, October 1999. Labor's power must be mobilized in struggle for black freedom.



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Steroids...

(continued from page 12)

the names of four of the 104 baseball players whose samples came up positive in "anonymous" testing in 2003—leading to calls to reveal the other 100. And Bonds' perjury charge is a page straight from the McCarthyite witchhunting textbook. Professional athletes are hauled before Congressional committees and grand juries and asked to confess to using PEDs, likely ruining the careers for which they have worked their entire youth. Yesterday you were an admired sports star, today you are a convicted felon—for "cheating" at sports—facing time in prison, especially if they don't like your attitude or deem it time to make an example of you to "save the children."

Whether an individual uses recreational drugs or steroids for bodybuilding or perceived enhancement of athletic ability is a personal choice. Hands off Barry Bonds! Government out of the locker room! We call for the decriminalization of drugs, which would also take the huge profits and consequently much of the violence out of the trade. For those whose addiction to drugs impairs their ability to function or who just decide it's time to quit, what is posed is a medical question, just as with smoking or alcohol. Under socialism, drug treatment and prescriptions would be easily accessible to those who need them as part of a broader program of free, quality medical care for all.

The Racist "War on Drugs"

The Congressional witchhunters and Justice Department lawyers have also caught in their web a few white players like Roger Clemens and Mark McGwire. During his 2005 testimony, McGwire admirably refused to name names: "I do not sit in judgment of other players, whether it deals with their sexual preference, their marital problems or their personal habits—including whether or not they used chemical substances."-But the hysteria about PEDs is part and parcel of the broader "war on drugs," which is racist to its core.

Over the past 30 years or so the prison population has grown by over 500 percent, with nearly one million black people behind bars—destroying the lives not only of those in prison but inflicting incalculable damage on families and entire neighborhoods. Nationally, 2 percent of the population cannot vote as a result of felony convictions, with some 13 percent of black males disenfranchised. According to a 2007 Justice Policy Institute report, black men are sent to prison on drug charges at 10 times the rate of white men, even though their drug use is approximately the same. Only 12 percent of the U.S. population, blacks make up over 40 percent of prison inmates, six times the rate of imprisonment for whites.

In a society that has few jobs for young black men, this mass incarceration has been buttressed by a racist ideological onslaught depicting an entire generation of black youth as inveterate criminals—"superpredators." Under "anti-gang" and post-9/11 "anti-terror" laws, black youths are routinely rounded up and thrown in jail for nothing more than wearing baggy jeans, hoodies and colored bandannas while congregating in groups of three or more. Many black professional athletes are just months removed from those same street corners and, no matter how many hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars they may make, are constantly reminded that one false move and they, too, could be packed off to jail.

The depiction of young black athletes as "thugs" was given further fuel in 2004 when Ron Artest, then a member of the Indiana Pacers, attacked a Detroit Pistons fan who had showered him with beer and a racist tirade. Artest was suspended for the season and forced to forfeit his salary. Compare this to the treatment of hockey player Terry O'Reilly, who, joined by

California Department of Corrections

Overcrowded California State prison in Los Angeles County. Racist "war on drugs" has meant mass incarceration of black and Latino youth.

all of his Boston Bruins teammates, left the ice during a 1979 game at Madison Square Garden to viciously hammer a New York Rangers fan. Suspended for only eight games, O'Reilly went on to become a coach for the Bruins, and his jersey hangs in tribute from the rafters of the Boston Garden alongside those of other Bruins stars. That their status as professional athletes provides little protection from the racist cops who routinely terrorize the ghettos and barrios was brought home to black players for the Cincinnati Bengals, who suffered more than ten arrests, many on charges related to drug use or alcohol, during the 2006-07 seasons.

In this racist society, Bonds' defiant attitude and refusal to bow down to the owners or ingratiate himself with the racist press corps marked him as an "uppity" black man and made him a target. ESPN writer Jeff Pearlman calls Bonds "a truly evil man" who "has deprived the game of integrity and turned its record books into mush." "Is steroids cheating?" Bonds declared with his classic flair. "You want to define cheating in America? When they make a shirt in Korea for $1.50 and sell it here for 500 bucks. And you ask me what cheating means?" (cited in "The Juice and the Noose," *International Socialist Review*, November-December 2006).

In racist America it is seen as obscene that some black sports stars get to be multimillionaires. Writing of his stature as baseball's highest-paid player in the early 1970s, Hank Aaron recalled, "The Atlanta fans weren't shy about letting me know what they thought of a $200,000 n----r striking out with men on base." Shortly after pitching ace Dwight Gooden led the New York Mets to the 1986 World Series championship, he made the mistake of thinking he could return to his Tampa, Florida, hometown in a silver Mercedes. Gooden was pulled over by 22 white Tampa cops for an alleged traffic violation and then beaten and bloodied. The uniformed thugs went for his pitching arm, yelling, "Hit his arm, hurt it, end his career!" Hoping to dispel rumors that he was on drugs, Gooden requested a drug test, which turned up positive for traces of cocaine, leading to his suspension by the Mets. Gooden was hounded throughout the rest of his career and ultimately thrown in the slammer on drug charges in 2005.

Raging About "Roid Rage"

From the "reefer madness" of the 1930s to the crack cocaine scare of the 1980s-90s, the anti-steroids crusade is replete with phony science—both falsifying the health risks and grossly inflating the abilities of performance enhancing drugs. Of course, this is all accompanied by what one could call "hypocrisy on steroids." We can only wonder how many members of Congress and medical "experts" condemning sports "cheaters" had some unlawful chemical assistance to get them through their bar exams and medical boards.

In 2004, tennis great John McEnroe announced that he had "unknowingly" used a steroid for six years during his career—nobody called for him to return his trophies or step down from his lucrative career as a sportscaster. Arnold Schwarzenegger parlayed the physique he attributed in part to performance enhancers into a movie career and ultimately the governorship of California.

Congressmen rant against steroids as a "national public health crisis" while the media peddles tales of "roid rage," suicides and pituitary tumors. This is as specious as the mythical "crack baby" hysteria of the mid 1980s (see "'Crack Babies' Furor Was Big Lie: Down With Racist 'War on Drugs'!" *WV* No. 933, 27 March). Even the Partnership for a Drug-Free America concedes that most health hazards are short-term and reversible and the "long-term, high-dose effects of steroid use are largely unknown."

For the high school, college and professional athletes exploited for school, nation and the bottom line, there are very real documented health hazards having nothing to do with PEDs. The athlete forced to take the "needle" to play while hurt, jeopardizing his future, is a sports ritual. Repeated concussions to football players have caused extensive brain damage and related chronic depression and dementia that have led to at least two suicides. The National Football League's response has been to deny the overwhelming medical proof and instead propose generating more revenue by making the season longer—ensuring even greater damage to players' health. The life expectancy of Canadian Football League players is 20 years less than that of the general population. Many colleges fail to even provide medical insurance for their athletes, who are often left to foot the bill for disabling injuries. High school football players dying of heat prostration during midsummer twice-a-day workouts in full uniform (pads and helmet) is an annual occurrence. And the whole purpose of boxing is for impoverished fighters, predominantly black and Latino, to scramble each others' brains.

Anabolic steroids have been used medically for 70 years, and the doses used by athletes are often comparable to those prescribed for men needing replacement testosterone due to testicular cancer. While there have been exceptionally rare cases of liver tumors related to oral ingestion of steroids, most steroids in use today are administered topically or by injection. The known side effects—acne, increase in blood pressure and cholesterol and shrinking of testicles over time, are all reversible within weeks of stopping use. In an interview in *Scientific American* online (11 February), Jay Hoffman, a professor of health and exercise science, described his use of anabolic steroids as a college and professional football player in the 1980s, when they were legal. Back then, team physicians "monitored our health. I had constant exams to make sure my liver enzymes were functioning properly and my heart was doing well, and that all the blood lipids were fine." Hoffman added, "I don't regret at all what I did, because I did it with care.... I would do it again. There are no long-term effects—I have three healthy, beautiful children. I didn't grow a third leg or become impotent or any of that BS you see on TV."

Anabolic steroids are a class of steroid hormones related to the hormone testosterone that stimulate protein synthesis within cells. They affect muscle mass by increasing the production of proteins and reducing physical recovery time by blocking the effects of the stress hormone cortisol on muscle tissue. They also decrease fat. They increase strength over time by allowing an athlete to ***train harder*** with quicker recovery—which then allows him to train more. While anabolic steroids *may* give a quick fix of limited muscle strength and size without exercise, they will not turn a Woody Allen into an Albert Pujols. And the main attribute of HGH appears to be cosmetic. A study published in 2008 revealed that HGH "may alter body composition" but "has minimal effect on key athletic performance outcomes and may, in fact, be associated with worsened exercise capacity." Over the course of a season, steroids may allow athletes to recover from minor injuries, muscle and ligament strains more rapidly.

While some athletes may get a benefit from PEDs—or at least believe they do—there is no conclusive evidence that steroids or other PEDs actually enhance performance. Of the 23 pitchers named in the 2007 Mitchell Commission report on steroids in baseball, 16 performed worse after their steroid use supposedly began. For the 48 hitters, their overall home runs and batting averages dropped.

The anecdotal "evidence" commonly cited is willfully ignorant. During his rant at the 2005 Congressional hearings about "cheating" in baseball, Kentucky Senator Jim Bunning, a Hall of Fame pitcher with a reputation for cheating by scuffing the ball with his belt buckle, retailed the most

Getty

Cap Anson, manager and star of the Chicago White Stockings, refused to play against integrated Newark team in 1887, ushering in 60 years of Jim Crow baseball.

common claim: "When I played ball with Hank Aaron, Willie Mays, and Ted Williams they didn't put on forty pounds of bulk in their careers, and they didn't hit more homers in their late thirties than they did in their late twenties." In fact, Aaron's best span of home runs came from the ages of 35 to 39 (exactly the same as Bonds), and at 37 he had his best year for home runs. (Bonds was 37 when he set the single-season home run record.) Ted Williams had more home runs per at bat in his late 30s than in his late 20s and batted .388 at the age of 38. Warren Spahn, career leader for most wins by a left-handed pitcher, had his second-best season at the age of 42, and Bunning himself had his best ERA (earned run average) at the age of 35.

With an increase in life expectancy, scientific training techniques, better playing conditions and better pay, there are many reasons why athletes as a whole play longer at a higher level today than did past generations. In other venues, Bunning expects capitalism's wage slaves to work longer and harder. Earlier this year he called for raising the Social Security retirement age from 67 to 70.

Because they have been prohibited by organized sports and are now illegal, there has been no study of the long-term effects of prolonged massive usage of PEDs, as no subjects are willing to undergo such examination. Even anti-steroid campaigner Linn Goldberg conceded that without people willing to be tested, "you can't draw much of a conclusion." Just like the insipid "Just Say No" campaign, the prohibition on steroids actually increases the potential dangers. As Julian Savulescu, professor of practical ethics at Oxford, pointed out in "Ethics of Performance Enhancement in Sports: Drugs and Gene Doping" (printed in *Principles of Health Care Ethics* [2007]):

> "Because doping is illegal, the pressure is to make performance enhancers undetectable, rather than safe. Performance enhancers are produced or bought on the black market and administered in a clandestine, uncontrolled way with no monitoring of the athlete's health. Allowing the use of performance enhancers would make sport safer as there would be less pressure on athletes to take unsafe enhancers and would generate pressure to develop new safe performance enhancers and to make existing enhancers more effective at safe dosages."

A rational society would both embrace the potentialities of improving human athletic performance, particularly the broader uses of anabolic steroids in muscle and tendon repair that would benefit a broad range of society, while at the same time conducting an objective scientific study of the potential medical dangers. But capitalism is not rational, and American capitalism, maintained on a bedrock of black oppression with all its commensurate racist ideology, is even less so.

Level Playing Field—Social Reaction on Steroids

The use of performance enhancers is as old as competitive sports itself, with natural steroidal substances used to enhance androgenic and anabolic growth in the body by athletes in ancient Greece. In the 1904 Olympics, American Thomas Hicks won the marathon after being given a dose of strychnine and brandy to help him get through the race. This particular PED didn't catch on. Internationally, controversy over anaholic steroids arose in the 1960s and '70s as athletes from the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, and the deformed workers states of East and Central Europe caught up to and in many sports surpassed the U.S. in international competitions. At the same time that steroids and amphetamines were not only commonplace but encouraged in the locker rooms of professional teams in the U.S., accusations flew that the success of Soviet and East European weightlifters, wrestlers and shot putters, and East German women runners and swimmers, could only be attributed to increased strength gained through steroid use, rather than the enormous advantages of the planned economies of these countries where capitalism was overthrown. Of course, artificially increasing body mass and strength could not explain the grace and skill of Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci, Soviet high jumper Valery Brumel or East German figure skater Katarina Witt.

Domestically, the condemnation of PEDs in sports fits like a glove with the dismantling of social programs that benefit blacks and other minorities and echoes the rationale for eliminating affirmative action in education in order to provide a "level playing field." In his 2004 State of the Union address, President George W. Bush denounced the use of PEDs as sending "the wrong message—that there are shortcuts to accomplishment." Echoing his right-wing predecessor, President Barack Obama, responding to the February admission of steroid use by Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez, stated: "I think it tarnishes an entire era to some degree. It's unfortunate because I think there are a lot of ball players who played it straight."

The flap over steroids in sports became white-hot as Bonds approached and smashed Babe Ruth's milestones and Hank Aaron's career home run record.

UPI

Muhammad Ali in 1965 rematch with Sonny Liston. Ali was stripped of his heavyweight title for refusing to be drafted at height of Vietnam War.

Bonds was deluged with racist hate mail as well as death threats. Predictably, the sports press corps—who sup on the steaks and single-malt scotches paid for by the multimillionaire team owners—disingenuously claimed it was steroid use and not racism that was behind the hostility to Bonds. But, as revealed in a CBS News/*New York Times* poll published in 2007, 57 percent of blacks—compared to 29 percent of whites—were rooting for Bonds to break the home run record, while 62 percent of black baseball fans believed race was a factor in the steroid charges against Bonds, as against 14 percent of whites.

Why baseball is ground zero for the steroids witchhunt is alluded to by Zev Chafets in his 2009 book *Cooperstown Confidential*: "Its statistical obsessions, antique uniforms, and ancestor worship all look back to an idealized version of America that did not include blacks and that many blacks simply don't share." Unlike other professional sports, baseball uniquely hasn't changed in any significant way in over 90 years, and the statistical measures of excellence for hitters and pitchers have remained constant. Nobody—in their right mind—would argue that Bob Cousy and George Mikan were better basketball players than Kobe Bryant and Shaquille O'Neal, or that Bronco Nagurski and Elroy Hirsch were better football players than Emmitt Smith and Jerry Rice. But pointing to their statistics, it is still common for Ty Cobb, Walter Johnson and especially Babe Ruth to be named as baseball's greatest players, and their era—one in which blacks were banned from the sport—to be considered not only the high-water mark of American professional sports, but an ideal for the country as a whole.

This is so embedded in American culture that in the 1989 movie *Field of Dreams*, James Earl Jones declares, "baseball has marked the time. This field, this game—it's a part of our past. It reminds us of all that once was good and it could be again." According to Jayson Stark, ESPN senior writer, "Once, the numbers of baseball used to mean something special and magical. And the men who compiled those numbers were transcendent figures in American life." Calling steroids use the worst scandal in American sports, surpassing the fixing of the 1919 World Series and college basketball betting scandals of the 1950s, Stark laments that baseball "as a unique paragon of American culture is devastated" (ESPN.com, 8 February).

This "paragon" harkens back to the era of segregation, and these "transcendent figures" are the racist Ansons, Cobbs, Speakers and Hornsbys. Attributing the success of Bonds, A-Rod, Sosa, Jones and others to chemical enhancement is the latest incarnation of the bogus biological rationales that have long flourished to demean increasing black athletic achievement in some sports. When Jesse Owens won four gold medals at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Avery Brundage, head of the U.S. Olympic Committee, declared, "one could see, particularly with Jesse Owens, how the Negroes could excel in athletics. Their muscle structure lends itself to this sort of competition." Dean Cromwell, track coach for the University of Southern California, wrote in 1941, "The Negro excels in the events he does because he is closer to the primitive than the white man." In 1971, *Sports Illustrated* ran an article, "Black is Best," stating that black athletes had an advantage in "double-jointedness and general looseness of joints."

This racist trash is not a relic of a bygone era. Esteemed former NBC anchorman Tom Brokaw gave it his imprimatur when he joined with Jon Entine in making the 1989 documentary *Black Athletes: Fact and Fiction*. Entine expanded on the subject in his 2000 book *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We Are Afraid to Talk About It*. Entine claims that blacks of West African ancestry, who make up most of the U.S. black population, have proportionately more lean body and muscle mass, broader shoulders, larger quadriceps and bigger musculature in general. Regarding jumping ability and sprinting success, he attributes to blacks "a higher percentage of fast-twitch muscles and more anaerobic enzymes, which can translate into more explosive energy." Adding a point that would be endorsed by any plantation overseer who demanded that a just-whipped slave return to the cotton field, Entine claims that blacks have "the ability to perform at a higher level of intensity with quicker recovery."

Despite protestations that his work has nothing in common with the racist tract *The Bell Curve*, Entine is a visiting "scholar" for the American Enterprise Institute, a right-wing think tank whose other "scholars" include *Bell Curve* co-author Charles Murray, Newt Gingrich and John Yoo, architect of the Bush administration's infamous torture memos.

Boston Celtics great Bill Russell exposed this garbage back in the 1970s: "It's okay to be racist as long as you try to sound like a doctor." Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the National Basketball Association's career scoring leader, defined the real reason for black stardom in sports: "Yes, I was just like the rest of those black athletes you've read about, the ones that put all their waking energies into learning the moves. That might be a sad commentary on America in general, but that's the way it's going to be until black people can flow without prejudice into any occupation they can master. For now it's still pretty much music and sports for us."

Today, little has changed, and even that window of opportunity is narrowing. U.S. blacks are now only 8 percent of major league baseball players, though there is an increasing number of black players from Latin America. They, too, have come under attack, as in the cases of David Ortiz and Manny Ramirez. A *New York Times* (25 October) article accusing Dominican "handlers" of providing PEDs to young athletes quoted a Dominican coach who admitted to providing vitamin shots to his players because "I can't afford to give them meat." Meanwhile, the predominance of blacks in professional basketball has declined with the influx of European stars, satisfying the call by Larry Bird in 2004 for more white stars in the NBA. And increasingly stringent NCAA standards have made it even more difficult for blacks from the ghetto prisons, euphemistically called schools, to gain athletic scholarships. As we wrote in "Racism in Sports" (*WV* No. 426, 17 April 1987):

> "For a minuscule number of blacks, sports can be a way out of the grinding poverty of America's hellish ghettos. But if Dwight Gooden, a hero, superstar and millionaire, is not safe from cop brutality, what black is? Certainly not the millions of unemployed black youth whose 'future' under capitalism is imperialist war or the scrap heap. For them, life is only injustice with no rewards. But capitalism has not simply spawned victims, it has created its own gravediggers. Black workers, strategically organized at the point of production, are potentially the most combative section of the working class. United in a multiracial Trotskyist vanguard party along with their white brothers and sisters, they can lead all the oppressed in a class-struggle fight against the rotting capitalist system."■

Spartacus Youth Club Events

BAY AREA

Thursday, November 19, 6:30 p.m.

The Struggle Against Class Collaboration in the Vietnam Antiwar Movement

San Francisco State University
Cesar Chavez Student Center
Rosa Parks E

Information and readings: (510) 839-0851
sycbayarea@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO

Saturday, November 7, 2 p.m.

Marx Was Right! Marxist Materialism and Economics

Saturday, November 21, 2 p.m.

The Capitalist State—An Instrument of Bourgeois Terror Against Workers and the Oppressed

Spartacist Public Office
222 S. Morgan St.
(between Jackson and Adams, Buzzer 23)
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441
chicagosyc@sbcglobal.net

NEW YORK CITY

Thursday, November 19, 7:30 p.m.

The Lessons of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution

Hunter College, Room TBA
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025
nysl@tiac.net

LOS ANGELES

Sunday, November 22, 12 noon

Latin America: Populist Nationalism vs. Workers Revolution

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239
slsycla@sbcglobal.net

TORONTO

Wednesday, November 18, 6 p.m.

Revolutionary Internationalism vs. NDP Anglo-Chauvinism

University of Toronto
Sidney Smith Hall
Room 1080
100 St. George Street
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138
spartcan@on.aibn.com

VANCOUVER

Thursday, November 19, 6:30 p.m.

The Russian Revolution: How the Bolsheviks Took State Power

University of British Columbia
SUB Room 42T
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353
trotskyist_vancouver@shawcable.com

Visit the ICL Web Site: www.icl-fi.org

Philippines...

(continued from page 4)

bridge. In 2001, Ocampo's Bayan Muna party mobilized the warm bodies for the military-backed "People Power II" coup. They supported President Arroyo's "People Power Coalition" senatorial slate, even while the blood of ousted populist president Joseph Estrada's plebeian supporters, gunned down at the gates of Malacañang, had barely dried. More recently, the "Honorable" Congressman Ocampo, a cothinker of exiled CPP founder and NDF political consultant Jose Maria Sison, was prominently flashing the "Lahan" sign at Aquino's funeral procession. He is now reportedly being considered for a guest senatorial slot on the ticket of multimillionaire Manny Villar's Nacionalista Party.

For their part, the ex-Stalinist splinters from the CPP, like Sanlakas, Alab Katipunan and the newly formed "socialist" Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM—Masses Power Party), were among the left groups with banners held high at the funeral procession. Associated with Australia's thoroughly reformist Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP), the PLM is headed by Sonny Melencio, who has emerged over the years variously as head political operator of the Liga Sosyalista, the Sosyalistang Partido ng Paggawa (Socialist Party of Labor) and the multitendency Laban ng Masa bloc.

While the PLM postures to the left of the CPP and is highly critical of Cory Aquino, its purpose remains to reinforce illusions in "People Power" among the working class. And though PLM leaders keep their distance from the Cory crowd, PLM supporters on the ground joined in the mourning for Aquino. The Melencioites are so enamored with "People Power" that they have been advocates of a broad, multi-class (i.e., *capitalist*) "transitional revolutionary government" in the same spirit as Cory's "revolutionary" government.

Loyalty to the strategy of "People Power" coupled with the appetite for pursuing "progressive" friends in the bourgeois military officer caste is a common thread that runs through Melencio's various "left" outfits. The Melencioites are the local cheering squad for "Third World" bourgeois nationalist leaders like Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez and

AP photos

Above: Imperialist top cop Obama meets right-wing Philippine president Arroyo in Oval Office in July. Right: Demonstrators outside U.S. embassy in Manila protest Obama's meeting with Arroyo, July 30.

Evo Morales in Bolivia. Closer to home, they confer with shadowy opposition groups inside the bourgeois armed forces, like the Young Officers Union and the Young Officers Union of the New Generation. The PLM admits that its political program is inspired by the platform of these bourgeois military opposition groups.

Far from posing an independent proletarian political alternative, the Philippine left has repeatedly exhibited shameless subordination to the bourgeoisie—from the two "People Power" movements, through the string of botched anti-Arroyo coup attempts, to the maneuverings for the 2010 elections under cover of the recent Aquino funeral. By chaining the working class and the oppressed masses to one or another wing of the Philippine bourgeoisie, these reformist leftists will not and cannot lead the masses to break free from imperialist enslavement and capitalist exploitation.

Basing itself on the Menshevik/Stalinist schema of two-stage revolution—which amounts to mobilizing the workers to bring bourgeois "progressives" and nationalists to power in the first "stage" and ends in the massacre of workers and communists—the Philippine left opposes the fight for proletarian revolution. Whether in the bourgeois Congress, in the "parliament of the streets" or fighting in the hills as guerrillas, the reformist left is deeply wedded to the politics of alliances with a mythical "progressive" bourgeoisie—the "popular front." And while the Philippine left courageously defies murderous repression, the purpose of its struggles is simply to pressure the capitalist class for concessions. Nevertheless, we defend the leftist guerrillas against the violence of the bourgeoisie and its blood-drenched state.

For Proletarian Class Independence

As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky outlined in the theory of permanent revolution, the bourgeoisies in countries of belated capitalist development are more fearful of the superexploited masses than they are of the imperialists, on whom they depend to secure their class rule. The chief condition for any real struggle by the toiling masses against imperialist subjugation and capitalist exploitation and oppression is the class independence of the proletariat.

With its large peasant population, the Philippines also needs an agrarian revolution, in which the poor peasants and agricultural workers seize the land. But defeating the bloodsucking landlords, with their private armies as well as government death squads, requires a revolution in which the urban proletariat places itself at the head of the insurgent peasant masses to smash the whole framework of capitalist/landlord rule. Underscoring the potential for revolutionary working-class struggle is the growth of a young, militant proletariat due to industrial investment in the Philippines by the U.S., Japan and other countries. The Philippine proletariat must lead the terribly exploited and oppressed masses of peasants, urban poor, women and minorities in a struggle for socialist revolution against all wings of the capitalist class, crowning its victory with the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Socialist revolution in the economically backward Philippines would necessarily have to link up with the struggles of the working people in Indonesia, South Korea and, in particular, the more economically advanced countries. It would act as a powerful impetus for proletarian political revolution in China and for socialist revolution in Japan, Asia's economic powerhouse. The millions-strong diaspora of Filipino workers throughout the Near East, North America and elsewhere can serve as a living link uniting the workers of the semicolonial countries and the imperialist centers.

The key to victory lies in forging an internationalist Leninist-Trotskyist party against all variants of nationalism and class collaboration. Defense of those subjugated by the imperialists around the globe demands the pursuit of class struggle in the U.S. and other imperialist centers. Here in the U.S., we seek to build a revolutionary workers party which champions the rights of blacks, women, immigrants and all the oppressed as part of the fight for proletarian revolution to smash racist American imperialism. The International Communist League fights to reforge the Fourth International of Leon Trotsky as the indispensable instrument for leading new October Revolutions around the world. ■

NUMMI...

(continued from page 5)

politicians and businessmen speaking from a stage set up in the union hall parking lot. The audience cheered for three bills designed to create tax incentives to keep NUMMI open that have been introduced by Democrats in the California State Legislature. Union members were urged to "call your state legislators today!" The featured rally speaker was Lt. Governor John Garamendi, who passionately urged union members to send a message to Toyota that "we know that you've got a very tough, a very difficult divorce with old, bankrupt General Motors, but...come out of that divorce, and you'll have a new lover right here in Fremont." He called the proposed incentives a "wedding ring." He was hugged by UAW bureaucrats on the stage and loudly cheered by the audience.

Meanwhile, according to the union Web site, the UAW has negotiated an agreement with NUMMI that allows either party to terminate the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement with only five days' notice. A week after the rally, NUMMI managers held an assembly of employees to announce the planned closure of the plant in March 2010. A few days later, the UAW's "Friends of NUMMI" rally task force held another rally of about 100 (including kids and retirees) at Senator Dianne Feinstein's office in San Francisco to plead for tax incentives for management. Protesters held a banner reading: "There is still hope."

The UAW bureaucracy has offered every sort of concession short of dissolving the union as a sign of loyalty to American capitalism. Today, as they have for decades, UAW bureaucrats trade jobs for union stock shares and seats on the U.S. automakers' boards, as tens of thousands of auto workers are put out on the street. Gettelfinger denounced Toyota as ungrateful, but the *New York Times* noted that he made no mention of GM, which pulled out of the joint venture as a result of the union-supported bankruptcy deal. It was the pullout of GM that precipitated this plant closure.

The UAW bureaucracy's chauvinist protectionism is all too familiar. I remember the last meeting before the plant closure in February 1982, where we argued against this same racist poison. Speaking from the floor, I denounced the anti-Japanese statements made by the officials. I argued that our union should have no part of such a policy, as it was the opposite of everything we stood for. I pointed out that trade wars historically lead to shooting wars, and that such racist crap is also the program of the KKK race terrorists. Further, the answer to worries about plants moving to Mexico was for the UAW to help organize Mexican auto workers.

For all the protestations of Toyota executives today that they are not closing the plant to rid themselves of the union, Fremont NUMMI was Toyota's only unionized U.S. plant. Toyota has five other plants in the U.S., all non-union—four in the South and one in Indiana (with the opening of a brand-new plant in Mississippi delayed by the recession). The UAW tops do nothing to organize the non-union plants and have nothing bad to say against GM, but complain about Toyota, playing up anti-Japanese nationalism. So now as in 1982, in this and many other ways, poisonous protectionism is cranked up to cover for the bureaucrats' opposition to any struggle.

The UAW membership has suffered this new defeat not in struggle, but as in 1982 by the hand of the UAW's pro-capitalist leadership, from the International to the local level.

K.A.

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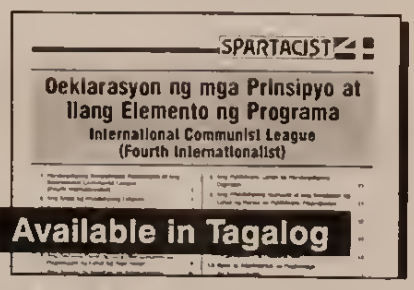

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Iraq...

(continued from page 1)

The Iraqi working class has been devastated by the U.S. imperialist occupation, but the proletariat in the region remains a powerful force, such as in Iran, Egypt and Turkey. Freedom from grinding imperialist exploitation and the achievement of democratic rights for all people in the area cannot be achieved under capitalism. They require the overthrow of bourgeois rule, leading to the establishment of a socialist federation of the Near East and linked to the fight for workers revolution in the advanced capitalist countries.

Iraq 1958: The Proletariat Betrayed

Iraq is not a nation but a patchwork of different peoples and ethnicities carved by the British imperialists out of the old Turkish Ottoman Empire at the end of the First World War as a client state to oversee their oil interests. The country thus fabricated was a myriad of rival ethnic, religious and national groupings governed by feudal and tribal leaders, through which the British pursued their imperial policy of "divide and rule." In such a society, the exertion of secular rule under capitalism is possible only under something like the late Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist dictatorship.

At the same time, the development of an oil industry in Iraq and elsewhere in the region led to the creation of a proletariat, in whose hands lay the power to lead all the oppressed against imperialist subjugation. In the 1950s, the Near East became a hotbed of revolutionary working-class struggles. In particular, the experience of the Iraqi Communist Party (ICP) in that period provides rich confirmation of our perspective of united class struggle by the multinational proletariat of the Near East as the means to ending imperialist subjugation, social reaction and brutal exploitation (see "Near East, 1950s: Permanent Revolution vs. Bourgeois Nationalism," *WV* Nos. 740 and 741, 25 August and 8 September 2000).

Not only was the early ICP the most proletarian Communist Party in the Near East but it had a large component from oppressed national, religious and ethnic groups. A majority of the ICP's early leaders were Christians and Shi'ites; it recruited a significant number of Jews; and in the early 1950s one-third of the party's leadership was Kurdish. The 2002 documentary *Forget Baghdad*, focusing on four Iraqi-Jewish Communists who were eventually forced to flee to Israel, gives a sense of the power and influence that the ICP once had in Iraqi society.

From its inception, the ICP called for the right of Kurdish independence. But this principled position was abandoned in the mid 1950s. Pressured by the Kremlin bureaucracy, Stalinists throughout the Near East courted Arab nationalist regimes like Nasser's in Egypt. The ICP criticized its previous stance "that there exist two main national groups in Iraq," declaring that "the fraternal Kurdish people has no interests which are incompatible with the interests of any of the Arab countries" (see "The Kurdish People and the U.S. Occupation of Iraq," *WV* Nos. 804 and 805, 23 May and 6 June 2003).

National Geographic

British troops enter Baghdad, March 1917. Iraq's borders were arbitrarily drawn by colonial occupiers.

The most powerful demonstration yet of the revolutionary capacity of the working class in the Near East came in 1958 as the fall of the Iraqi monarchy touched off a huge proletarian upsurge. Armed, highly organized and led by the ICP, the proletariat literally had power in its grasp. The U.S. made contingency plans for a counterrevolutionary invasion, and U.S. troops landed in Lebanon while British forces entered Jordan. However, the Stalinist ICP leadership betrayed the uprising by subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeois-nationalist regime of General Abd al-Karim Qassim (Kassem). This betrayal was carried out under orders from Moscow with the aim of facilitating Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev's upcoming parley with U.S. president Eisenhower in a futile quest for "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

The defeat of the revolutionary wave prepared the way for a counterrevolutionary bloodbath in 1963, when the Ba'athist party (and its torturers, such as Saddam Hussein) briefly came to power for the first time and rounded up and murdered some 5,000 leftists and trade unionists on the basis of lists supplied by the CIA. Deposed shortly thereafter, the Ba'athists staged another coup in 1968 with CIA backing, which soon placed Hussein at the pinnacle of power.

For years, the U.S. and other imperialists supported the murderous dictatorship of the Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein. As we wrote after Hussein was captured by U.S. forces (*WV* No. 816, 26 December 2003):

> "Saddam Hussein was Washington's bloody bastard. He was Washington's close ally and client while he massacred tens of thousands of Kurdish people. He was a mainstay of U.S. imperialist policy in the Near East while he arrested, tortured and executed thousands of Iraqi Communists, workers' leaders, leftists, ethnic minorities and religious opponents, and waged eight years of bloody war with predominantly Shi'ite Iran. But when Hussein slipped his leash and made a grab for Kuwait in 1990, this former ally and flunkey for U.S. imperialism in the Near East became Washington's all-purpose bogeyman."

Hussein was executed on 30 December 2006 after a show trial presided over by an Iraqi regime whose police and military run death squads that terrorize the population. The execution was, as we wrote at the time, "nothing more than barbaric 'victor's justice'" that "had the markings of a lynch mob" (*WV* No. 883, 5 January 2007).

Princeton University Press

Iraqi CP leaders head 1959 May Day march. Four years later, one-third of CP's Central Committee was murdered by nationalist Ba'ath regime.

Only Socialist Revolution Can End Imperialist War

A workers revolution in Iraq in 1958-59 would have had a profound impact throughout the Near East, inspiring revolutionary upheavals in other countries and helping to shatter the chauvinist consensus binding the Hebrew-speaking proletariat to the Israeli capitalist rulers. The beheading of the Iraqi proletariat had an equally profound effect in the opposite direction, allowing the imperialists to tighten their grip on the region. It also paved the way for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, which today falsely postures as the defender of the besieged Palestinians and the only alternative to corrupt nationalist regimes and their Western patrons. In fact, notwithstanding U.S. imperialism's "war on terror" crusade against political Islam, the U.S. has historically fostered the growth of Islamic fundamentalism. In 1950 Cold Warrior John Foster Dulles—who at the time of the 1958 Iraqi revolution was U.S. secretary of state—declared: "The religions of the East are deeply rooted and have many precious values. Their spiritual beliefs cannot be reconciled with Communist atheism and materialism. That creates a common bond between us, and our task is to find it and develop it" (cited in Paul A. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* [1957]).

When the Iraqi proletariat raises its head again, it will come up against not only the imperialist forces but the domestic forces of reaction. In Iraq and throughout the Near East, Marxist workers parties must be forged in combat against imperialism and in opposition to all manner of nationalism and religious reaction. We fight for workers revolutions to overthrow all the bourgeois regimes of the region, including the Zionist state of Israel.

Essential to this perspective is the understanding of the necessity of socialist revolution in the imperialist centers. A central obstacle to winning U.S. workers to that understanding is widespread illusions in Democratic Party "lesser evilism." Those illusions are assiduously propagated by the pro-capitalist trade-union bureaucracy, which chains the working class to its capitalist class enemy.

Those illusions are also propagated by reformist "socialist" groups like the International Socialist Organization (ISO) and Workers World Party (WWP). Through various coalitions, the reformist left built an antiwar movement (now defunct) that sought to lead protesters into unity with anything that passed for an "antiwar" Democrat. Thus all these coalitions refused to raise the elementary call for military defense of Afghanistan and Iraq against the U.S., which would have repelled Democratic Party politicians. While today they complain about some of Obama's policies, these fake "socialists" celebrated his election: WWP called it "a triumph for the Black masses and all the oppressed" (*Workers World*, 20 November 2008), while the ISO wrote an editorial the day after Obama's inauguration titled "Looking Forward to Change," where they declared that Obama's election showed that "some of the cruel sins of America's past were finally being overcome" (*Socialist Worker* online, 21 January).

In our opposition to the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, we have stressed the need for class struggle against the U.S. capitalist rulers at home. Imperialist wars and occupations are the concentrated expression of a profit system that daily slaughters workers on the job, that consigns millions of jobless to the scrap heap, that metes out brutal cop repression against racial and ethnic minorities and immigrants. Imperialism is capitalism in its death agony, where a handful of advanced powers compete for control of markets, raw materials and access to cheap labor. This, and not particular governments or government policies, is the cause of imperialist war.

Here in the U.S., it is the multiracial working class that has the power to bring down the most dangerous enemy of all humanity, the U.S. ruling class. What is necessary is the forging of a revolutionary workers party, a U.S. section of a reforged Fourth International, that fights to overthrow the capitalist system through socialist revolution. Such a party can be built only through politically combating those who retard the political consciousness of the working masses by preaching that this system can be reformed to serve their interests. Only when the proletariat seizes power will imperialist slaughter, material scarcity and ethnic bloodletting be put to an end and the construction of an egalitarian socialist society begin. ■

Praeger Inc.

Baghdad, 1958: Mass demonstration after officers' coup toppled British-imposed monarchy. Opportunity for proletarian revolution in Iraq was derailed by Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy and Iraqi Communist leadership.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Baseball, Racism and Steroids

Sports Illustrated

AP

Barry Bonds and Marion Jones, two stellar black athletes whose careers were destroyed by the racist morality police under the pretext of the "war on drugs."

Down With the Witchhunt! Decriminalize Drugs!

It was a quintessential America's national pastime moment. Following a series against the St. Louis Cardinals, on 18 August 1908 the New York Giants took a day off from a grueling pennant race to play an exhibition game against a local team in Springfield, Illinois. For three days before the Giants came to town, white mobs laid waste to the city's black business district and then destroyed the impoverished black Badlands neighborhood. Two black men, Scott Burton and 84-year-old William Donnegan, were lynched, and just about every black person was forced to flee the city. Immediately before the game, with embers from the Badlands still smoldering, Giants manager John McGraw was presented with a piece of one of the lynch ropes as a souvenir. McGraw promised he would keep it for good luck.

The Giants failed to make the World Series, but McGraw went on to become one of the first dozen admitted into baseball's hallowed Hall of Fame. Though not part of his exhibit at the Hall, McGraw's "good luck charm" could have easily found a home there. Enshrined with him are Ku Klux Klan members Tris Speaker and Rogers Hornsby; Ty Cobb, a racist sociopath who once beat a black chambermaid; and Cap Anson, manager and star of the Chicago White Stockings, whose refusal to play against an integrated Newark team in 1887 ushered in 60 years of Jim Crow baseball. Eddie Collins, Tom Yawkey and Larry MacPhail, who all labored long and hard to keep blacks out of the major leagues, are honored there as well.

It is this American sports temple that Barry Bonds, one of baseball's all-time greats—a seven-time Most Valuable Player who holds both the single-season and career home run records—along with a growing roster of predominantly black and Latino superstars, such as Alex Rodriguez, Manny Ramirez, Gary Sheffield and Sammy Sosa, are denounced as "morally unfit" to join. This is because of their purported use of performance enhancing drugs (PEDs)—anabolic steroids and human growth hormones (HGH). What could await Bonds instead is another venerable American institution far more receptive to black men and women—prison. Blacklisted out of baseball while he remained one of its most productive offensive players, Bonds was indicted in November 2007 on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice for telling a witchhunting federal grand jury he did not knowingly use PEDs—*before they were made illegal*. He faces up to 30 years in prison.

Bonds isn't the first black athlete dragged through the mud and deprived of his livelihood—nor would he be the first sent to prison—by the racist morality police under the "war on drugs." A number of black track and field stars have had their medals stripped and been banned for life at the whim of the sports czars. One of the most vicious campaigns has been the persecution of Marion Jones, the black sprinter who won five medals at the 2000 Olympics and whose picture graced advertisements, magazines and posters. In October 2007, Jones was forced to plead guilty to lying to the Feds about using PEDs and sentenced to six months in jail, with two years' probation. The Judge "spared" Jones more jail time, instead tacking on 800 hours of "community service" in order to "educate children and school-age athletes about the importance of competing without cheating." Although she has a few productive years left, Jones was forced to retire from the sport.

In the 1980s, black baseball star Willie Wilson and football great Mercury Morris were sent to the slammer for cocaine use, while Mitchell Wiggins and Lewis Lloyd, Houston Rockets stars, were banished for life. Black Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson, who set a world record for the 100-meter dash at the 1988 Olympics, was stripped of his gold medal for "cheating" after testing positive for a steroid. White U.S. swimmer Janet Evans also set a world record at the 1988 Olympics, which she attributed to the special fabric of her swimsuit—without any retribution.

According to Dr. Linn Goldberg, co-director of the Adolescents Training and Learning to Avoid Steroids program, "Our research showed that steroid use is linked to other drugs and alcohol abuse. You can't just look at steroid use in isolation." Behind every attack on drug use in this country has been the capitalist rulers' efforts to enforce social conformity and concomitantly bolster the repressive apparatus aimed at the working class and oppressed minorities. Democratic president Lyndon Johnson's 1968 "Safe Streets Act" and Republican Richard Nixon's 1970 "Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act" were designed to clamp down on the ghettos that had exploded in rage against poverty, dilapidated housing and cop terror in the mid to late 1960s. The 1980s' "war on drugs," launched by conservative president Ronald Reagan, was a central part of the bourgeois rulers' efforts to morally regiment the population during Cold War II against the "godless" Soviet Union. We said at the time that the "war on drugs" was a war against black people. For their part, black Democrats like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson were the most enthusiastic champions of Reagan's anti-drug witchhunt, which ushered in a broad-ranging attack on fundamental rights—from the right to privacy in your own home to the right not to have the cops beat a confession out of you.

Today, the government's steroids witchhunt against Bonds and other high-profile athletes sets a dangerous precedent for further attacks on the rights of us all, not least the right to confidentiality in medical and legal matters. The government raids on the BALCO lab and the home of Bonds' trainer, Greg Anderson, in order to obtain records of Bonds' urine tests are replicated in the escalating seizure of medical records by anti-abortion prosecutors. Federal agents unlawfully "leaked"

continued on page 8

AP

Dodgers pitcher Sandy Koufax, 1961. Unnatural motion required to throw 95-mile-an-hour fastball forced 30-year-old Koufax to retire after 1966 season.

WORKERS VANGUARD

50¢

No. 947 | C-701 | 20 November 2009

For Free Abortion on Demand!
For Free, Quality Health Care for All!

U.S. Imperialism: Enemy of Women's Rights

Reuters

Steve McCurry

Left: U.S. Marines patrol a village in Farah Province, Afghanistan, April 30. Right: Women in U.S.-"liberated" Afghanistan continue to be segregated, humiliated, degraded.

For Women's Liberation Through Socialist Revolution!

Women's right to abortion, having been chipped away for decades, is under renewed assault. On November 7, the House of Representatives passed a health care "reform" bill that would prevent millions of Americans from buying insurance that covers abortions. It is the most dramatic victory for anti-abortion bigots since the grossly misnamed "partial birth abortion ban" was passed by Congress six years ago.

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi authorized a vote on the anti-abortion provision, and it was inserted into the "reform" bill, after a lobbying blitz by Catholic bishops. It would effectively ban abortion coverage in private health insurance plans offered on the insurance "exchanges" that would be created under the bill. Meanwhile, enforcement of an Illinois law requiring doctors to notify a parent when a woman 17 or younger seeks an abortion was temporarily blocked by a court suit early this month. This law represents a grave threat to the right of teens to abortion in the Midwest; such parental notification laws are already being implemented in states neighboring Illinois.

We print below, edited for publication, an October 10 forum given in the Bay Area by Amy Rath, editor of the *Women and Revolution* pages of *Spartacist* (English-language edition).

* * *

Since the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the U.S. bourgeois press has been full of stories about the horrors of life for women in that country. This has nothing to do with protecting women and everything to do with lining up support for the U.S. imperialist intervention. More recently we have been hearing about the plight of women in not only the Taliban-controlled areas, but also under the regime of the corrupt and discredited U.S. ally, President Hamid Karzai. We are told that Afghanistan's maternal and infant mortality rates are among the highest in the world, that schoolgirls get doused with acid and that female politicians are shot or threatened with beheading for daring to work outside the home—all this, and much worse, is true.

The bourgeoisie's counterfeit concern about the plight of women is a cynical and cruel bandying of empty words in the service of support for the aims of U.S. imperialism. The main enemy of the Afghan people is American imperialism! Our starting point is proletarian class opposition to the U.S. capitalist rulers and to the imperialist system as a whole. In the lead-up to the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq we called for the military defense of these countries, without giving any political support to the reactionary, woman-hating Taliban cutthroats or the capitalist dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Today, insofar as the forces on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers, we call for their military defense against imperialism, without giving them any political support. *All U.S./NATO troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan now! Hands off Pakistan!*

This story goes back 30 years, to when the United States initiated what was then the largest CIA operation in its history to support the forefathers of the Taliban. The *mujahedin* had launched a guerrilla war against the government of the left-nationalist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), which had sought to implement a program for redistributing land, lowering the bride price, educating women and freeing them from the head-to-toe *burqa*. Responding to repeated requests by the embattled PDPA regime, the Soviet Union intervened in December 1979. For genuine Trotskyists, there was no question which side working people and the oppressed the world over had in this conflict. The threat of a CIA-backed Islamic takeover on the USSR's southern flank posed pointblank the need for

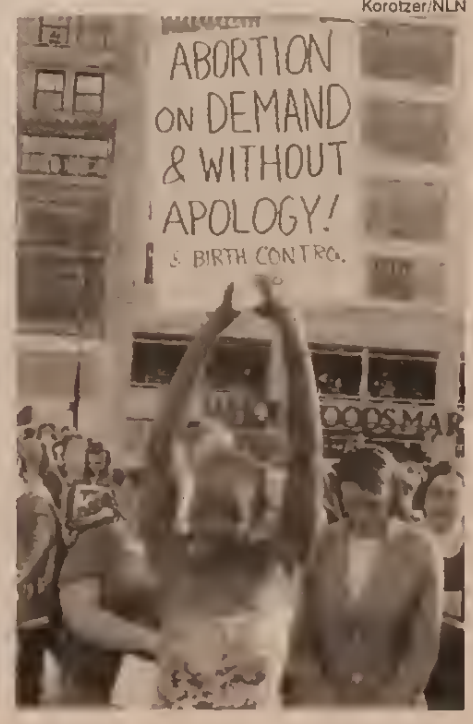
continued on page 7

Hutmacher/Wichita Eagle

1941–2009

June 1 New York City vigil, one of a series of gatherings held to honor Dr. George Tiller (above) following his assassination by anti-abortion bigot.

Korotzer/NLN



Medical Science vs. Homeopathy

23 September 2009

Dear comrades,

In the otherwise excellent *Women & Revolution* article "Wealth Care USA" reprinted in the current *WV* (No. 943), I have objections to the following:

> "In 1847 a small group of physicians had founded the American Medical Association primarily as a means to combat 'sectarians,' that is, nontraditional physicians such as homeopaths, who were seen as a threat to the wealth and social position of the medical profession. (The AMA even denounced the Surgeon General of the U.S. for cooperating with a homeopathic physician to save the life of Secretary of State William Seward, when he was shot the night of Lincoln's assassination!)"

First of all, there is a factual mistake; William Seward was stabbed, not shot, in the attempt on his life.

I'm disturbed by the implied defense of homeopathy and other "nontraditional" (i.e., non-scientific) medicine. Two main principles of homeopathy (invented by Samuel Hahnemann in the early 19th century) are: 1) Like cures like. A substance which causes a symptom (such as poison ivy for a rash, or caffeine for insomnia) can be used to cure it. 2) Dilution. Said substance is made more effective by dilution. The curative substance is diluted so much that the remedy does not contain even a single molecule. But the water somehow contains a spiritual "memory" of it. This is obviously at odds with science, which as Marxist materialists we are champions of. Not surprisingly, it has never been demonstrated to work beyond a placebo effect. (A good new book with a discussion of homeopathy is *Superstition: Belief in the Age of Science*, by Robert L. Park.)

When so-called alternative medicines are shown not to work in scientific tests, their proponents often cry that they are victimized by the scientific establishment. Other current examples include HIV denialists and anti-vaccination conspiracy theorists.

The problem with medicine for profit is not that quackery is kept out. (Indeed, increasingly it's not, with hospitals opening up centers for alternative medicine. See the PBS *Frontline* documentary "The Alternative Fix" for chilling scenes of a so-called holistic healer sitting in on a consult as an equal with trained doctors in a consult about a seriously ill patient, and a hospital staff homeopath treating an autistic child.) Engels noted in *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845):

> "Another source of physical mischief to the working-class lies in the impossibility of employing skilled physicians in cases of illness. It is true that a number of charitable institutions strive to supply this want, that the infirmary in Manchester, for instance, receives or gives advice and medicine to 22,000 patients annually. But what is that in a city in which, according to Gaskell's calculation, three-fourths of the population need medical aid every year? English doctors charge high fees, and working-men are not in a position to pay them. They can therefore do nothing, or are compelled to call in cheap charlatans, and use quack remedies, which do more harm than good."

A future international planned socialist economy will provide health care for all, and sweep away the material basis for the persistence of dangerous anti-scientific quackery.

Communist greetings,
Jeff T.

* * *

6 October 2009

To: Editor, Workers Vanguard

In what was otherwise a pair of outstanding, accurate and refreshingly honest articles on health care in the USA and elsewhere in the Sept 25 Workers Vanguard, in the second article, ("The Great Health Care Debate/Wealth Care in USA") was the following paragraph:

> "In 1847 a small group of physicians had founded the American Medical Association primarily as a means to combat 'sectarians,' that is, nontraditional physicians such as homeopaths, who were seen as a threat to the wealth and social position of the medical profession. (The AMA even denounced the Surgeon General of the U.S. for cooperating with a homeopathic physician to save the life of Secretary of State William Seward, when he was shot the night of Lincoln's assassination!)"

This paragraph is uncritical of homeopathy, and indeed arguably can be con-

Marxism and Science

TROTSKY

LENIN

Anti-scientific quackery and all forms of religious and superstitious backwardness, including on sexuality and abortion, are on the rise in this period, marked by the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92. Referring to the great German philosopher Georg Hegel, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky defended the scientific nature of Marxism in a 1939 piece written against an opposition in the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party that shrank from defense of the USSR on the eve of the Second World War and included elements who renounced dialectical materialism.

Hegel wrote before Darwin and before Marx. Thanks to the powerful impulse given to thought by the French Revolution, Hegel anticipated the general movement of science. But because it was only an *anticipation*, although by a genius, it received from Hegel an idealistic character. Hegel operated with ideological shadows as the ultimate reality. Marx demonstrated that the movement of these ideological shadows reflected nothing but the movement of material bodies.

We call our dialectic, materialist, since its roots are neither in heaven nor in the depths of our "free will," but in objective reality, in nature. Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of nebulae. On all the rungs of this ladder of development, the quantitative changes were transformed into qualitative. Our thought, including dialectical thought, is only one of the forms of the expression of changing matter. There is place within this system for neither God, nor Devil, nor immortal soul, nor eternal norms of laws and morals. The dialectic of thinking, having grown out of the dialectic of nature, possesses consequently a thoroughly materialist character.

Darwinism, which explained the evolution of species through quantitative transformations passing into qualitative, was the highest triumph of the dialectic in the whole field of organic matter....

Marx, who in distinction from Darwin was a conscious dialectician, discovered a basis for the scientific classification of human societies in the development of their productive forces and the structure of the relations of ownership which constitute the anatomy of society. Marxism substituted for the vulgar descriptive classification of societies and states, which even up to now still flourishes in the universities, a materialistic dialectical classification. Only through using the method of Marx is it possible correctly to determine both the concept of a workers' state and the moment of its downfall.

All this, as we see, contains nothing "metaphysical" or "scholastic," as conceited ignorance affirms. Dialectic logic expresses the laws of motion in contemporary scientific thought. The struggle against materialist dialectics on the contrary expresses a distant past, conservatism of the petty bourgeoisie, the self-conceit of university routinists and... a spark of hope for an after-life.

—Leon Trotsky, "A Petty-Bourgeois Opposition in the Socialist Workers Party" (1939), printed in *In Defense of Marxism* (Pathfinder, 1973)

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No. 947 — 20 November 2009

Cleveland, Fort Hood, Obama

6 November 2009

"Capitalist society is and has always been *horror without end*."
—V. I. Lenin

I'll try not to cry, Baruch Spinoza, Leon Trotsky. I'll try not to laugh. I'll try to understand. The occasion is that of the confirmed deaths of eleven black women in Cleveland who weren't "missed," quite naturally, by the powers that be. The capitalist rulers' motto, anyway, is that the only "good black is a dead black," unless they are helping to slaughter poor, oppressed people throughout the world.

The Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism, Barack Obama, tells the world about how horrible are the killings of U.S. soldiers at a U.S. Army base by a U.S. officer who faced the prospect of going to Afghanistan and possibly not returning.

According to Obama's bourgeois ethos, the poor black women in Cleveland (and elsewhere) were/are just a bunch of lazy, drug-crazed louts and fiends who played in the fast lane and got what was coming to them.

Remember, working people: the rulers' gain is our pain, their tears are not ours and their rotting system comes at the expense of our lives. It needs to be eradicated through international proletarian revolution.

Well, Brother Joe Hill, I believe that we can both mourn and organize for that day, when

> "...burning sticks—and crosses—is not mere child's play.
> But a madman in his most incandescent bloom
> Whose loveless soul is imperfection in its most lustrous groom,
> So stand fast, young old mule, soothe in contemplation
> Thy burning hole and aching thigh.
> Your stubbornness is of the living
> And cruel anxiety is about to die...."
> —from "Freedom" by Charles Mingus

We'll see.

Don A.

On Paid Sick Leave

14 November 2009

Dear Editor,

In addition to demanding free quality health care for all (including *all* immigrants) as we do in "For Socialized Medicine," (*Workers Vanguard* No. 943, 25 September), we have to make it unambiguously clear that we support unconditional, unlimited paid sick leave for all workers at full (100%) pay, beginning with *day one of employment*. The same principle applies to the unemployed: They should get full union-scale pay and benefits, including when they are sick and cannot look for work. The USA is the only advanced capitalist country without a national health care or health insurance program; it is also the only one without paid leave guaranteed by national legislation. In Germany, for example, every employee is entitled to 100% of their salary for the first six weeks of sick leave, paid by the employer, starting *day one* of employment! After six weeks the insurance provider pays the sick leave called *Krankengeld*.

In the United States in contrast, sick pay, even in better union contracts, is pathetically short, underpaid and often only available after a probationary period. For longer illnesses workers must pay out-of-pocket for expensive, long-term disability insurance. There is enormous pressure for workers to drag their sick carcasses to work, even with contagious infections like the flu, or face discipline including firing for "excessive" sick leave. In turn, managers and supervisors are rewarded with bonuses and raises for "excellent" attendance records.

How many industrial accidents and how many of the 36,000 flu-related deaths a year in the U.S. might be preventable with guaranteed paid sick leave. The absence of such a national policy is catastrophic in the face of a pandemic such as we are facing now. Indispensible to the demand for Free Quality Health Care is: *Unconditional, Unlimited, Paid Sick Leave for All Workers and the Unemployed!*

Comradely,
Reuben S

strued as suggesting homeopathy deserves a place in the rational practice of medicine along with scientific evidence-based, clinically-tested treatments.

I have little doubt the AMA's primary motivation for attacking homeopaths in 1847 was to protect the profits and power of its membership, but it makes for a pretty poor condemnation of the AMA to accuse them of trying to "combat" and crush an organization of outright total quacks.

In the century and a half that has elapsed since 1847, there have been many hundreds of good (double blind, randomized, with meaningful sample size) clinical tests of homeopathy. NONE of them have found ANY homeopathic remedy to be superior in efficacy to a placebo. NONE. Homeopathy, as quackery, has been responsible for immense harm to health. This BOTH by turning people away from effective, science and evidence-based treatments, AND by the tendency of homeopaths to counsel parents against vaccinating children against childhood diseases. It was a mistake for Workers Vanguard to treat such a gross fraud in that fashion.

Homeopathy is most prevalent in India, in large part because quality evidence-based scientific medicine is not available to its population.

Any high school chemistry student can tell you what Avogadro's number is: 6.02×10 to the 23rd power, the number of molecules in one "mole" [a mole is the molecular weight in grams of substance]. Knowing this, any high school chemistry student can calculate that at the dilution of its active ingredients specified for a large fraction of homeopathic remedies, it is highly unlikely a single molecule of that active ingredient remains. [Avogadro and Samuel Hahnemann (the latter being the man who founded homeopathy) were contemporaries.] Thus, most homeopathic "remedies" are nothing but PURE WATER, with NO active ingredient what so ever in the water. The "theory" of homeopathy is total crackpot nonsense in the light of current scientific knowledge of pharmacology and biochemistry. As such, one would expect to find homeopathy to be absolutely worthless. This is what a century of testing its specific remedies has confirmed.

As a scientist, a physician, and a Marxist, I share your contempt for the AMA, for most of the reasons you provided in the remainder of your discussion of the history of medical care in the USA. I never joined that organization, in part because I was well aware of most of what you presented. However, to repeat, attacking the AMA for its attack on quackery (regardless of its motivations for attacking quackery) is NOT an effective way to expose it.

A subscriber to Workers Vanguard since the early 1970's, I note you have repeatedly (rightly and wisely) endorsed Enlightenment rationalism and evidence-based science, and (again rightly and wisely) repeatedly condemned superstition and faith-based beliefs. It is inconsistent with such a position to present so uncritically a mention of homeopathy.

You are rightly proud of the fact that, historically, you have rejected trendy and opportunistic "in" positions of liberals and the pseudo-left, taking unpopular but correct positions regarding feminism, black nationalism, the nature of the Cuban state, the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in support of a secular government, and other important issues. Why now even appear to be capitulating to current ignorant and fuzzy-headed (but popular in a segment of the left) knee-jerk and wrong ideas about "alternative medicine"?

As a side issue, I do note that in 1847, even mainstream medicine had little to offer in the way of effective treatments, and in fact was not at that time solidly based on science, and employed many untested, ineffective, and in some cases (such as blood letting) harmful to lethal "treatments". It is doubtful that anyone in 1847...whether a total quack such as a homeopath, or a respected mainstream physician...had much to offer William Seward beyond bed rest. With few exceptions, it was not until roughly a century later, at the time of the availability of penicillin to the masses in the mid to late 1940's, that science and evidence-based medicine began to provide substantial numbers of proven and effective treatments. None of this excuses your uncritical mention of, and arguable implicit support for the total quackery that is homeopathy in your article.

This is NOT, as I hope you understand, a political criticism. I find myself entirely in agreement with the political observations made in both articles, including (as mentioned above) your strong criticism of the AMA.

This is a matter of scientific and medical fact.

It behooves Marxists, when they refer to issues of science, to get their facts right. Scientific method (that group of approaches to examining the world which endeavor to minimize as much as possible the bias of the investigator), the greatest achievement of the Enlightenment and greatest advance in human thought, is the bed-rock on which Marxism stands.

I would urge you, comrades, to print a clarification regarding the matter.

Respectfully,
Martin H. Goodman, MD

References:

The best article I have read on homeopathy...one that is exceptionally well-written, a delight to read, and extremely well documented with reference material ...is the chapter on homeopathy in the book "Trick or Treatment" by Edzard Ernst and Simon Singh, published in 2008. Pages 93-143. This book also has chapters on acupuncture, chiropractic, and herbal medicine and attempts to cover all of alternative and complementary medicine. It presents the most up to date hard clinical scientific evidence regarding the efficacy...or lack there of...of "complementary and alternative" medical disciplines. The book's introductory chapter expounds brilliantly what evidence-based clinical science is, and the inspiring history that led to its being adopted by honest, caring, serious healers. It should be read by all.

[All brackets and ellipses are the authors'. —ed.]

New York Public Library

Louis Pasteur's work was instrumental in developing the germ theory of disease.

***WV* Replies:**

We thank our readers for pointing out the error in the article "Wealth Care USA," reprinted from *Women and Revolution* No. 39 (Spring 1991) in *WV* No. 943 (25 September). This error is particularly unfortunate given the growing popularity of quack "medicine" today. In the 21st century, these snake-oil treatments—homeopathy, chiropractic, "New Age" spiritualism, herbal remedies, acupuncture—are international multibillion-dollar businesses. While some of these treatments may be relatively harmless and may sometimes have a placebo effect, more often they are dangerous both in themselves and because they divert patients from needed medical treatment.

The distinction between science-based, mainstream medicine and homeopathy is stark and irreconcilable, though in the early 19th century "mainstream" medicine embraced many of the same mystical concepts. As physicist Robert Park explained in *Superstition: Belief in the Age of Science* (Princeton University Press, 2008), vitalism was "the prevailing medical superstition of the time," representing

continued on page 11

30 Years Later

We Will Not Forget Greensboro Martyrs

On 3 November 1979, in broad daylight, nine carloads of Klansmen and Nazis drove up to a black housing project in Greensboro, North Carolina, where an anti-Klan rally was gathering. With cool deliberation, the killers took out their weapons, aimed, fired and drove off. Five supporters of the Communist Workers Party—union officials, union organizers and civil rights activists—lay dying in pools of blood. Ten others were wounded or maimed for life.

The Greensboro Massacre was the bloodiest fascist attack in the U.S. in decades. It was a conspiracy of fascists and their capitalist state patrons. From the outset, the fascists were aided and abetted by the government, from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent who helped train the killers and plot the assassinations, to the "former" FBI informer who rode shotgun in the motorcade of death and the Greensboro cop who brought up the rear. When the two-minute fusillade ended, the cops moved in to arrest the survivors for "rioting." Two successive all-white juries acquitted the killers of all charges, affirming once again the meaning of "justice" in this racist capitalist country.

Carried out during the Democratic Carter administration, the Greensboro Massacre was the opening shot of what would become the Reagan years' war on labor and blacks. When the Klan announced it would "celebrate" this massacre on 10 November 1979 in Detroit, the Spartacist League initiated a labor/black mobilization that drew over 500, many of them black auto workers, who made sure that the Klan did not ride in the Motor City. In city after city over the following years, when KKK and fascists threatened to mobilize, we brought out core battalions of black and labor militants who understood that the fascists and the Klan can't be ignored—they must be stopped.

Greensboro Daily News

Nelson Johnson (with stick) passes fallen comrade, 3 November 1979. Five supporters of the Communist Workers Party were killed by KKK and Nazi terrorists, abetted by cops and Feds, in Greensboro Massacre.

Annual commemorations of the Greensboro Massacre repeatedly focused on the call for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was founded in 2005 and modeled on the South African commission. The South African commission served to whitewash the crimes of apartheid-era butchers and to assure a peaceful transition to neo-apartheid rule under the African National Congress-led government, which continues the superexploitation and oppression of the black and other non-white masses. To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Greensboro Massacre, a four-day "Truth, Justice and Healing Conference" was held in Greensboro, with the keynote speaker being James Joseph, U.S. ambassador to South Africa under the Clinton administration and former board member of the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA front.

The Greenshoro Massacre was racist murder. The truth is that no justice can come from the same capitalist state whose forces helped to orchestrate the killings in the first place. "Reconciliation" with the forces of racist reaction and with the capitalist rulers, who keep the fascist bands in reserve to unleash against the working class in times of social crisis, can only serve to politically disarm and demobilize workers and the oppressed in the face of fascist terror.

We honor the Greensboro martyrs—Cesar Cauce, Michael Nathan, Bill Sampson, Sandi Smith and James Waller—as well as the many others who were wounded that November day. They take their place on a proud roster of fighters for the working people and oppressed, whose memory must be seared into the consciousness of the working class. We honor them by fighting to build a revolutionary workers party that will fight to put the working class in power through a socialist revolution that will make sure there will be no more Greensboros

National Equality March for gay rights, October 11, Washington, D.C.

RCP: Anti-Gay Moralists Then and Now

On October 11, tens of thousands turned out for the National Equality March for gay rights in Washington, D.C., calling on Barack Obama, Commander-in-Chief of the imperialist military that is brutally occupying Iraq and Afghanistan, to overturn both Bill Clinton's infamous "don't ask, don't tell" policy for homosexuals serving in the armed forces and Clinton's 1996 Defense of Marriage Act. (Obama opposes gay marriage.) Though supportable, these demands reflect the fundamentally conservative thrust of the gay rights milieu in a period of little social struggle. As we noted in "For the Right of Gay Marriage...and Divorce!: Marriage and the Capitalist State": "It's a far cry from 'free love' and the Stonewall Rebellion of 1969 to today's marriage ceremonies, PTA meetings and Democratic and Republican Party fund-raisers" (*WV* No. 824, 16 April 2004).

Far from being a defender of gay people in this viciously oppressive and bigoted society, the Democratic Party is a staunch promoter of anti-gay "family values" and brutal anti-sex witchhunts. This results from the capitalist class' dependence on the institution of the family, which arose as a means of ensuring the inheritance of private property. The main source of women's oppression, the family is an important means for the bourgeoisie to regiment society and anti-gay bigotry flows from the need to defend this patriarchal structure against any "deviations." Our article on gay marriage explained:

> "We socialists fight for a society in which no one needs to be forced into a legal straitjacket in order to get medical benefits, visitation rights, custody of children, immigration rights, or any of the many privileges this capitalist society grants to those, and only those, who are embedded in the traditional 'one man on one woman for life' legal mold."

We seek to replace the family as an economic institution by socializing childcare and housework, freeing women to play a full and equal role in social and political life as part of constructing an egalitarian, socialist society.

> between working people, above competition among them.
>
> Socialist society will wipe out the decadence of capitalism in all spheres. Prostitution, drug addiction, homosexuality and other practices which bourgeois society breeds and the bourgeoisie promotes to degrade and enslave the masses of people, will be abolished. The prostitutes, drug addicts, homosexuals and others who are caught up in these things will be re-educated to become productive members of society, with working class consciousness. The shame connected with these practices will be taken from the shoulders of these

Programme and Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party USA
October 1975

> emancipation of women. As mentioned earlier, some expressions of homosexuality (and especially some expressions of male homosexuality in today's world) can at times constitute pretty blatant manifestations of male right (and contribute to the oppression of women in this way), *but even the most backward and socially objectionable of these practices or "scenes" are not the "cause" of the oppression of women.* As we have emphasized, under socialism, as the material

"On the Position on Homosexuality in the New Draft Programme"
2001

In contrast, rally co-organizers in the International Socialist Organization attempted to police the rally against our "disruptive" opposition to the Democratic Party and our defense of Roman Polanski, targeted for consensual sexual activity that took place more than 30 years ago (see "Stop Vendetta Against Roman Polanski!" *WV* No. 944, 9 October). The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), long notorious on the left for their open anti-gay bigotry, turned out with banners calling for gay rights, pushing Democratic Party lesser-evilism through their still ongoing "World Can't Wait—Drive Out the Bush Regime" project.

The RCP is desperately clawing its way deeper into the liberal Democratic Party swamp, in an atmosphere of anti-sex bigotry and "family values" moralism. Of course, the RCP wouldn't have gotten far at the National Equality March while ranting against lesbians and gays as "degenerates." When they were known as the Revolutionary Union, this group issued a position paper describing homosexuality as a disease of capitalist society like "exotic religious sects, mysticism, drugs, pornography, promiscuity, sex orgies, trotskyism, etc." ("Position Paper of the Revolutionary Union on Homosexuality and Gay Liberation," 1974). Ever the opportunists, since that time they've had a "change of line"—though not exactly a change of heart.

RCP's "New Position": Same Old Prejudice

The RCP's 2001 "On the Position of Homosexuality in the New Draft Programme" admits that their former Programme "did tend to treat the fairly widespread phenomenon of homosexuality in the U.S. as a reflection of imperial decay and decadence, and although not portraying homosexuals as enemies, did regard them as individuals whose backward outlook needed to be reformed and homosexual practice remolded. This was incorrect"! They proceed to defend this "incorrect" program:

> "Our view on this subject was also a product of opposition to and criticism of the more degrading and abusive sexual practices engaged in by some homosexuals (which do exist), and to some misogyny towards women (including lesbians) on the part of some male homosexuals. Also, basic masses, among whom our Party is based, works among and relies on as a decisive force for revolution, have a wealth of experience with U.S. prisons and with the widespread use of homosexual sex (including rape) to establish power hierarchies over people in prison and sometimes outside of prison. ... All the negative things we spoke of really did (and do) exist...."

So what is the "new" position on homosexuality? Now they "do not see a homosexual orientation or the practice of homosexuality *per se* as something that constitutes an impediment to the emancipation of women and the abolition of all oppressive and exploitative relations." Gee, thanks.

The RCP apparently felt compelled to investigate, "why do some people engage in sexual activity with people of the same sex?" This obsession with trying to find the culprit for something that is a *natural phenomenon* led them to embark on an extensive "theoretical review" of the cause of homosexuality. The fact is, what "causes" homosexuality is *completely irrelevant!* All we can say is, it's as natural a sexual expression as any other—occurring not only in all human societies throughout history but in many other species. All the RCP's baloney about reviewing biological studies to conclude that "*even the most backward and socially objectionable of these practices or 'scenes' are not the 'cause' of the oppression of women*" (emphasis in original) is a fig leaf on their bigotry. They would have us believe that in the decades when they were busy excluding gays from their organization as "degenerates," science couldn't have told them that they were full of crap.

What they admit to sounds bad enough, but the RCP's document is rife with falsifications. The statement that "our party has always been firmly opposed to the discrimination and attacks leveled against homosexuals and we welcomed and encouraged the participation of homosexuals in the revolutionary struggle" *is a bald-faced lie.* Actually, they *excluded* gays from their organization, stating in their 1974 position paper: "homosexuals cannot be Communists." All their rhetoric about fighting "pogromist" attacks on gays is *empty*—they pushed the same reactionary garbage that's used to whip up murderous hysteria against gays, lesbians and transgenders, including calls to "reeducate" homosexuals from their "degrading" and "shameful" practices. We wonder what the RCP would say about "socialists" who pushed an alleged analysis of black people as intellectually and morally inferior while insisting that they "always opposed" lynching!

The Family and Uncle Joe

The RCP attempts to drag the Marxist movement into the mire of their own Stalinist degeneracy, claiming, "we were unfortunately in line with some long-standing historical tradition within the

CORRECTION

In "LRP State Department Socialists Embrace New Bedfellow" (*WV* No. 945, 23 October), we wrongly wrote that Socialist Appeal is the U.S. affiliate of Ted Grant's International Marxist Tendency. The organization's name is the Workers International League. *Socialist Appeal* is the name of their publication.

international communist movement." In reality, the communist movement from its beginnings has stood forthrightly in defense of homosexuals' rights, including courageous public stands such as August Bebel's 1898 speech in the German Reichstag for repealing the penal code against "unnatural fornication." The Russian Revolution gave flesh and blood to the Marxist understanding of the woman question and homosexual rights. The Bolsheviks' position was explained in a 1923 pamphlet by Grigorii Batkis, director of the Moscow Institute of Social Hygiene:

> "Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality—Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called 'natural' intercourse. All forms of sexual intercourse are private matters. Only when there's use of force or duress, as in general when there's an injury or encroachment upon the rights of another person, is there a question of criminal prosecution."
>
> —*The Sexual Revolution in Russia*

Soviet Russia annulled all laws discriminating against homosexual acts, and a campaign was undertaken against anti-homosexual prejudice as part of the broader struggle for the liberation of women and children from the prison of the family.

In fact, the "longstanding historical tradition" the RCP follows is Joseph Stalin's, under whom many democratic rights for women and gays were overturned and abortion and "sodomy" were re-criminalized. This was part of the process of political counterrevolution where a conservative bureaucratic caste usurped political power from the working class in impoverished Soviet Russia. The Stalinist bureaucracy, a parasitic layer dependent on the socialized property forms won through the Russian Revolution, sought to buttress its own position by promoting social conservatism and respect for authority, including the outright bourgeois ideology of Great Russian chauvinism and the cult of the family.

As exiled revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky observed in his 1936 analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet workers state:

> "Instead of openly saying, 'We have proven still too poor and ignorant for the creation of socialist relations among men, our children and grandchildren will realize this aim,' the leaders are forcing people to glue together again the shell of the broken family, and not only that, but to consider it, under the threat of extreme penalties, the sacred nucleus of triumphant socialism."
>
> —*The Revolution Betrayed*

With Soviet Russia isolated after the revolution failed to spread internationally, in 1924 the Stalinists developed the ideology that socialism could be built in one country if only peace could be maintained with the imperialists. This program of class collaboration led to the strangulation of revolutionary struggles internationally, the betrayal and murder of Communists around the world and, in 1991-92, the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union itself. We stand in the tradition of Trotsky's Left Opposition and its fight against the Stalinist betrayers and for the revolutionary, proletarian, internationalist principles that animated the October Revolution.

Second only to their cultish obsession with their Chairman Bob Avakian, the RCP promotes Chairman Mao, who represented the same nationalist program of "socialism in one country" as Stalin, only in a different country, China. The 1949 Chinese Revolution overthrew capitalism and the rapacious landlords, in the process transforming the lives of Chinese women who in prerevolutionary times were barely recognized as human beings. However, the society that emerged was and remains a bureaucratically deformed workers state, qualitatively similar to Stalin's Russia. As Trotskyists, we fight

Xin Liliang

"The Happy Life Chairman Mao Gave Us," 1954 Maoist propaganda poster glorifies the reactionary institution of the family.

to defend the gains of the 1949 Revolution, including through the overthrow of the parasitic bureaucracy and the establishment of workers democracy. Internationally, we fight for socialist revolution, including in advanced industrial countries, which will lay the basis for an increase in the productive capacities of society and allow the family to be replaced.

Just like the Stalinist leaders in Trotsky's polemic, the Chinese Maoists (who have regarded homosexuality as an "illness") promote the family as an ideological prop. Like all Maoists, the RCP glorifies the family as the fighting unit for socialism. However, following Mao's death, the RCP backed the Gang of Four in the intra-bureaucratic fight in the Chinese Communist Party. After the Gang of Four was outmaneuvered, the RCP wrote China off as capitalist, leaving these defenders of "socialism in one country" without a country.

Chairman Avakian's Bedroom Police

The RCP's 1974 position paper stated:

> "We feel that the best way to struggle out such contradictions in our personal lives is in stable monogamous relationships between men and women based on mutual love and respect... In reality, gay liberation is anti-working-class and counterrevolutionary. Its attacks on the family would rob poor and working class people of the most viable social unit for their revolutionary struggle against the imperialist system."

The sentimental portrait of the socialist family in RCP's new Programme is likewise a far cry from Marx and Engels' view of an institution "based on the overt or covert domestic slavery of the woman" (Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, 1884).

Spartacist table at National Equality March. Our defense of Polanski and opposition to Democrats drove reformists crazy.

The RCP's present enthusiasm for gay marriage apparently has more to do with their enthusiasm for forcing people into the stultifying institution of monogamous marriage than with any opposition to the oppression of homosexuals. In their 1988 article "On the Question of Homosexuality and the Emancipation of Women," the RCP ranted against gay men's "very narcissistic and self-indulgent lifestyle, including a high degree of preoccupation with sex" and "transvestism and displays of stereotypical 'effeminate' behavior" (we could go on). The RCP's list of "backward and socially objectionable" practices includes sexual promiscuity, pornography and casual anonymous sex—and their injunction that everyone who joins their party will be held to a "higher standard of proletarian morality and discipline than the masses," means that hapless prospective members, gay *and* straight, should think twice before surrendering their personal freedom to join the ranks of Chairman Bob Avakian! (One might also question the "standard of proletarian morality" of an organization that felt compelled to include rules against raising "money for yourself in the name of the Party" and attempting "to get people to support or join the Party by threatening them" in its 2001 Programme.)

In any case, the RCP's bourgeois family values have led them to embrace the vilest anti-sex campaigns, foaming at the mouth with disgust for anything that strays from their Maoist dystopia. The crowning example is their slander as "child molesters" of NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association), an organization that calls for the decriminalization of consensual relationships between younger and older men. Anti-pedophile hysteria is used by the state to justify the grossest intervention into people's private lives, and especially to police the behavior of youth. We have a proud history of defending NAMBLA and opposing reactionary age of consent laws and all laws that curtail the privacy and sexual freedom of consenting individuals—for which the RCP also slanders us as "child molesters"! We believe in the principle of effective consent, that is, the sexual behavior that consenting individuals pursue is nobody's business but their own. For the RCP, an organization that lumps together porn and rape, the distinction between consensual and coerced sex is simply irrelevant.

The Marxist program does not include any position on the value of any particular sexual orientation, and the Spartacus Youth Clubs stand on the tradition of the Marxist movement in opposing all forms of discrimination against homosexuals. As we concluded in our 1976 RCP polemic "Bible Belt Maoists Rant at 'Deviant Sexual Behavior'":

> "As Lenin declared in *What Is to Be Done?*, communists must be 'in, but not of' bourgeois society. Communists must seek to become the 'tribune of the people,' championing the cause of all the victims of bourgeois oppression and exploitation. Foolish superstitions and vicious bigotry are the odor of decaying bourgeois society."
>
> —*Young Spartacus* No. 47, October 1976

Bereft of a Marxist program and shamelessly wallowing in the present backward consciousness inculcated by bourgeois society, the RCP caters to and promotes that consciousness. Here, as on every other crucial question, the program of the RCP has nothing to offer anyone who wants to fight for a revolution against this exploitative, oppressive capitalist society. ■

Spartacus Youth Club Class Series

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Fighting Reformists' Obamamania

WV Subscription Drive Success

Comrades and sympathizers of the Spartacist League and Spartacus Youth Clubs successfully concluded our *Workers Vanguard* subscription drive in October, making 110 percent of the national quota and adding 674 new subscriptions to *WV*. The annual sub drive is always a major campaign for the party, providing an opportunity to introduce new readers to our Marxist biweekly press, along with our international theoretical journal, *Spartacist*, our publication *Black History and the Class Struggle* and the publications of other sections of the International Communist League. It is also an occasion to make contact with and resubscribe longtime readers.

The outcome of the sub drive was successful, but it was not easy going. Our sub drive took place in the context of the biggest world economic crisis since the Great Depression and the first year of Obama's presidency, hailed by the trade-union bureaucrats, bourgeois liberals and reformist "socialists" as a sea change from the oddly demented Bush regime. Last year, we stood out for our class opposition to all capitalist politicians, including Obama, whose election has provided a facelift for blood-soaked U.S. imperialism. While there is a certain level of disappointment among many in Obama's presidency, illusions in this Wall Street Democrat run deep. Indeed, in the face of right-wing mobilizations, particularly around the issue of health care "reform," many, especially black working people, have solidarized with Obama against wingnut reaction. Headlines such as "Down With Obama's War in Afghanistan!" (*WV* No. 942, 11 September) were especially controversial.

At the same time, the disastrous effects of the Great Recession have increased interest in learning more about Marxism among new subscribers, a few of whom are or have been around various reformist groups. A giveaway popular with new subscribers was our May 2009 pamphlet, *Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class*.

Our press is our central weapon for raising consciousness of the need for a working-class vanguard party to lead the proletariat and the oppressed in the struggle for socialist revolution to overthrow the capitalist order and establish working-class rule. As Bolshevik leader V. I. Lenin put it in "Where to Begin" (1901): "A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser." This understanding stands in sharp counterposition to that of the reformists, whose opposition to socialist revolution means liquidation into the Democratic Party swamp. The stodgy, thoroughly reformist Communist Party—whose main "principle" is to support the Democrats—has gone so far as to relegate its journal *Political Affairs* only to the Internet, and there are rumors that it plans the same for its newspaper, *People's World*.

Marxists do not normally expect heightened class and social struggle in the immediate wake of a massive economic meltdown threatening the jobs and livelihoods of workers. At the same time, we intersected expressions of disgruntlement among working people during our sub drive. In the Bay Area, we sold well to BART transit workers who were going through their contract negotiations. Comrades in Chicago went to the Teamsters picket lines when SK Hand Tools workers struck in August, after the company had canceled all health benefits. We also sold well at a New York City Transport Workers Union Local 100 rally, and a few "Day of Outrage" rallies at work sites, in defense of the union's contract. Trips to several Southern port cities allowed us to renew contact with our longtime readers in the docks and shipyards. We intervened at rallies protesting the California budget cuts and the proposed massive tuition fee hikes at UCLA and UC Berkeley. The rallies were held in conjunction with a one-day statewide strike by the University Professional and Technical Employees union. At UC Berkeley, other campus workers, students and faculty joined the UPTE picket lines, chanting "Don't cross the picket lines!" The 5,000-strong rally held that day was the largest at UC Berkeley in years.

We sent a sub drive team to New Orleans, which is still groaning under the impact of Hurricane Katrina and the rulers' racist atrocity against the poor and black population of the city in its aftermath. *WV*'s lead article "For Socialized Medicine! Expropriate the Health Care Industry!" (No. 943, 25 September) touched a raw nerve there. Other trips to the South included those to North Carolina, Norfolk, Charleston and Washington, D.C., where a key task was combating widespread illusions in Obama and the Democrats. We also highlighted our struggle for black liberation through socialist revolution, including through our articles on Michael Jackson, the arrest of Henry Louis Gates Jr. and the fight to free death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Throughout the sub drive, comrades made a particular effort to sell subscriptions to *Espartaco*, the publication of our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México. Working with comrades in the Trotskyist League/Ligue Trotskyste of Canada, we also made a trip to Montreal, where our newly published French-language edition of *Spartacist*, particularly the article on the Spanish Civil War, was the biggest selling point by far for subscriptions.

More generally in the sub drive, our unconditional military defense of the Chinese deformed workers state and our opposition to the counterrevolutionary "Free Tibet" movement sparked heated exchanges with students, anarchists and others. Our insistence on full citizenship rights for all immigrants was polarizing, especially in the Southwest. Also controversial was our call for free abortion on demand and our defense of director Roman Polanski, who faces extradition to the U.S. for having consensual sex with a 13-year-old girl over 30 years ago.

WV sales teams intervened into several demonstrations organized by and/or built by the reformists, seeking to break activists from Democratic Party pressure politics. Among these events were the G20 protests in Pittsburgh outside the September 24-25 summit. While defending those arrested, we pulled no punches in our political exposure of the organizers of the protest, whose demands "vainly sought to pressure the capitalist state to serve the interests of the people" (see "Cops Rampage at G20 Protests," *WV* No. 944, 9 October).

The largest demonstration was the October 11 protest in D.C. in support of gay rights, which appealed to the Democratic Ohama administration, the heir to Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy and the Defense of Marriage Act. Reporting on the demonstration, Sherry Wolf of the International Socialist Organization made clear her organization's fealty to the Democratic Party, pushing the lie that it can serve the interests of the oppressed if enough "pressure" is applied: "Many organizers cut their teeth in the Obama campaign and feel, rightly, that without the mass pressure, President Obama never would have addressed LGBT issues as he did last weekend—and he never will act on those sentiments without an active and ongoing struggle" ("We've Just Begun to Fight," *Socialist Worker* online, 16 October).

Congratulations to all comrades on their hard work in the sub drive and especially to comrade Laura in the Bay Area for selling the most subs (109 points). Welcome to all of our new readers and those who renewed their subscriptions. We are proud of our history and revolutionary program and offer bound volumes of *WV* for sale as well as other publications of our party. We strive to make our paper forthright, polemical and hard-hitting, basing ourselves on the work of our revolutionary Marxist forebears.■

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Women and Revolution

Der Spiegel — Young Spartacus

Soviet intervention opened road to extending gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples. Left: Afghan women mobilized against U.S.-backed *mujahedin* (holy warriors). Right: Spartacist/Spartacus Youth League contingent at March 1980 anti-draft demonstration in Washington, D.C.

Women's Rights...

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unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, a bureaucratically degenerated workers state. The Soviet intervention also opened up the possibility of social liberation for the Afghan masses, particularly women. We said: Hail Red Army! Extend social gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples!

Under the Soviet military umbrella, the Afghan government began mass literacy campaigns and provided medical care. Over 300,000 peasants received land. By the late 1980s, half of all university students in Afghanistan were women, and women made up 40 percent of the country's doctors, 70 percent of its teachers and 30 percent of its civil servants. Women in the workforce had increased 50-fold, and 15,000 women served as soldiers and commanders in the Afghan army. The London *Guardian* online (30 September 2001) quoted Saira Noorani, a female surgeon who left Kabul in 2001: "'Life was good under the Soviets,' Saira said. 'Every girl could go to high school and university. We could go wherever we wanted and wear what we liked.... Since then everything has been a long dark night'."

But for much of the left, support for the Democratic Party at home and for anti-Communism abroad has been at the core of their program. With few exceptions, the reformist "socialists" all howled with the imperialists in demanding Soviet troops out of Afghanistan in the 1980s. We were alone on the left internationally in hailing the Red Army in Afghanistan.

The International Socialist Organization (ISO) and its then-parent group in Britain demanded: "Troops Out of Afghanistan!" (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 12 January 1980). The Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party likewise condemned the Soviet intervention. To justify siding with the reactionary *mujahedin* and their imperialist patrons, the reformist left invoked the lie of "poor little Afghanistan" and screamed about the national rights of the country being trampled by "Soviet imperialism." In fact, even if Afghanistan were a nation, the question of its national self-determination would have been subordinated to the overriding class and social questions—defense of the Soviet Union and the struggle for women's rights and social progress in Afghanistan.

Just across the border, Soviet Central Asia had once been exactly like Afghanistan—a miserably backward, desolate and benighted place, in fact not a nation but a patchwork of tribes and peoples. But in the 1920s, Soviet power came to Central Asia. To be sure, even the most powerful government cannot decree social advancement—it must be built. In 50 years, Soviet Central Asia had moved forward ten centuries because it had been transformed from a backward, tribal area by the socialized, planned economy of the USSR.

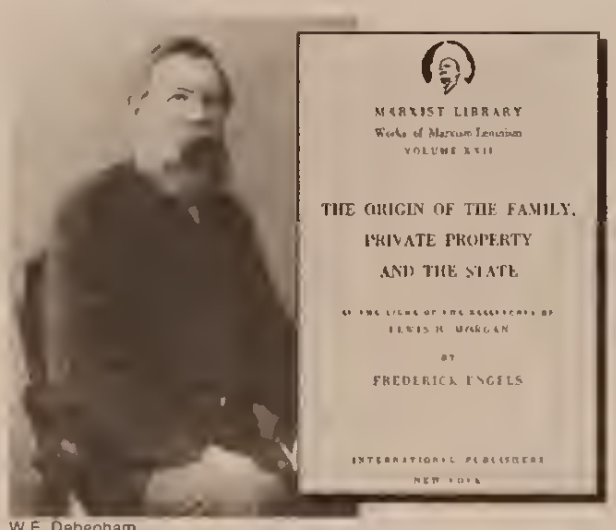
Why We Defended the Soviet Union

Upon coming to power in 1917, the Bolsheviks put into practice a number of crucial measures to begin the liberation of women. They made marriage and divorce simple matters of civil registration, entirely independent of the reactionary Russian Orthodox church, as part of an early decree giving women equal rights with men. Insofar as the poverty of the country allowed, they established communal kitchens, laundries and childcare centers to free women from the drudgery of housework—measures that sought to bring women into the workforce and into political life and lay the basis for replacing the family with socialized alternatives.

They abolished all laws regarding consensual sexual relations (laws against sodomy, adultery, homosexuality) because they thought the state had no business interfering in private sexual matters. In 1919, the Communist Party created the Department of Working Women and Peasant Women, or Zhenotdel, to organize special work among women, which included building over 25,000 literacy schools and donning the veil to reach the women of the Muslim East. In 1920, abortion was made legal, free and available in state hospitals under a doctor's care.

For the Bolsheviks, the liberation of women was an integral part of the emancipating goals of the communist program. Denouncing feminism as the tool of upper-class women seeking their own place in the male ranks of capitalist power and privilege, the Bolsheviks insisted that the place of the working woman was side by side with the working man. The proletariat as a whole must embrace the fight against women's oppression as part of its historic task of freeing humanity from the outmoded system of private ownership and production for profit.

Marxists hold that the institution of the family is the source of the oppression of women in class society. As Friedrich Engels laid out in his classic work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), under the "primitive communism" of the Stone Age, where a primitive equality prevailed, the division of labor between men and women derived from biology (women had to bear and nurse the young) and implied no subordinate social status. In what is now called the Neolithic Age, technological advances, particularly the development of agriculture, created for the first time a social surplus. This wealth was appropriated by a tiny minority, a ruling class, producing the division of society into classes, with a state of armed bodies of men to defend the ruling class.



W.E. Debenham

Friedrich Engels in 1888. His classic work, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* laid bare material roots of women's oppression.

The institution of the family came about first and foremost as a means to determine inheritance of private property and the power that came with it. As a means of consolidating wealth in the hands of a tiny minority, the patriarchal family decreed monogamy of women so that there was no question as to the "legitimate" heir. The biological fact of childbearing and child rearing was henceforth tied to the social oppression of women.

In the thousands of years since the advent of class society, the institution of the family has taken many different forms according to the needs of the ruling class, its economy, politics, religion and culture. In the capitalist order it serves not only as the principal mechanism of inheritance for the propertied classes, but as the means by which the next generation of wage slaves is raised. A big part of this is instilling bourgeois ideology, "morals," and the requisite obedience to the powers that be. As such, the family is vitally necessary to the maintenance of production for profit. It will take a socialist revolution to lay the basis for the replacement of the necessary functions of the family—e.g., the raising of children by socialized childcare, laundries, dining rooms, which will eliminate the oppression of women once and for all.

This is the future that the Bolsheviks strove for. They recognized, however, that without qualitative economic development, a fully socialist economy and the liberation of women were a utopian fantasy in backward, isolated Russia. Most importantly, they founded the Communist International with the goal of forming revolutionary proletarian parties and fighting for revolution, especially in the advanced industrial countries, like Germany.

In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained that from the beginning the Bolsheviks recognized that "the real resources of the state did not correspond to the plans and intentions of the Communist Party. You cannot 'abolish' the family; you have to replace it. The actual liberation of women is unrealizable on a basis of 'generalized want.' Experience soon proved this austere truth which Marx had formulated eighty years before."

The gains made by women in the Soviet Union are one of the reasons why we Trotskyists stood for unconditional military defense of the USSR against imperialist threats and internal counterrevolution. Stalin turned back the clock on many of the gains of women—for example, abortion was made illegal in 1936—but the enormous power of the planned economy remained. Despite its Stalinist bureaucratic degeneration, the Soviet workers state was able to provide all with a job, housing, health care and education. These are among the social gains that we called for the Soviets to introduce to Afghanistan in the 1980s.

We warned from the outset that the Kremlin bureaucracy, in its quest for "peaceful coexistence" with U.S. imperialism, might cut a deal at the expense of the Afghan peoples. When the Soviet forces completed their pullout from Afghanistan in early 1989, paving the way for a bloody onslaught against Afghan workers, women and leftists, we bitterly denounced this betrayal while the reformist left cheered. The ISO said: "We welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan." But the Red Army was *not* defeated militarily in Afghanistan. The Soviet withdrawal in 1988-89 was a *political* betrayal by the Stalinist bureaucracy under Mikhail Gorbachev. Objectively, the Soviet intervention had cut against the grain of the nationalist Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country." Gorbachev's betrayal flowed from the whole outlook of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which subordinated the interests of the international proletariat in an attempt to defend its own privileged position as a parasitic layer resting on the collectivized economy, thus undermining the defense of the Soviet workers state itself. We fought

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for a proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and return the Soviet Union to the Bolshevik internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky.

The Soviet bureaucracy's attempt to trade Afghan blood for good will in Washington only whetted the appetites of the imperialists, intent upon the counterrevolutionary destruction of the entire Soviet Union. Inside the USSR, this move strengthened pro-capitalist forces. The Red Army pullout from Afghanistan was directly linked to the final collapse of the USSR itself, a monumental defeat for the working class and oppressed internationally. The Stalinist bureaucracy had so besmirched the great ideals of communism with betrayals, murder, bureaucratic distortions and lies that by 1991-92 the working class was passive in the face of the revolution's undoing and the restoration of capitalism under Boris Yeltsin.

The counterrevolution in East Europe and the Soviet Union was immediately a direct blow to women in every country. East Germany, for example, had probably the highest status for women in the world. Following capitalist counterrevolution, millions of working women were thrown out on the streets, forced back to the nursery and the kitchen when the state-owned factories were destroyed in the wake of the capitalist reunification of Germany.

VAAP

Above: Russian workers demonstration calling for eight-hour workday, 1917. Right: Women activists in the Bolsheviks' commission for work among women, the Zhenotdel, in 1924 in Kirgizia.

Central Museum of the Revolution, Moscow

Permanent Revolution

The subjugation of women in underdeveloped countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan and India is not rooted in some uniquely reactionary quality of Islam or Hinduism, but rather in social backwardness, which is also fostered and enforced by the imperialist powers. In early modern Europe the rise of capitalist property relations and the Enlightenment profoundly undermined backward feudal social relations rooted in an economy based on the rule of a landholding aristocracy. The French Revolution of 1789-93 is the most powerful example of the progressive, revolutionary role of the young bourgeoisie in sweeping away the ancient feudal order.

To generalize and simplify a complex history over several centuries: the earlier medieval power of the church was constrained, the landholding aristocracy was largely destroyed—and the status of women improved over time through industrial development and social struggle. Among the toiling masses, the family was no longer based primarily on labor-intensive peasant agriculture, but on the wage slavery of industrial production.

But in areas like the Near East and South Asia, capitalism arrived belatedly—and it arrived with European colonialism, which allied itself with the local feudal powers. Imperialist penetration blocked the path of social and economic development. Thus the religions of the East did not have to adapt in the same way as did Christianity (or Judaism), and anti-woman barbarism has remained correspondingly more profound and overt. This is an example of what the utopian socialist Charles Fourier meant when he said that the condition of women serves as a hallmark of overall emancipation in any society.

The capitalist system has long outlived its progressive role and is now the main impediment to the forward march of human emancipation. The development of advanced industrial economies and parliamentary democracy in the West was accompanied by, and to a large extent based on, the brutal exploitation of the colonial countries. The imperialists' subjugation of the "Third World" requires that they prop up their local puppets, who maintain and reinforce the indigenous forces of social and cultural reaction, as the U.S. does in Afghanistan.

To achieve social and national emancipation in the neocolonial world requires the seizure of power by the proletariat, standing at the head of all the oppressed and led by internationalist revolutionary vanguard parties. As Trotsky stressed in advancing the perspective of permanent revolution, only proletarian revolution can break the imperialist yoke over such countries and—with the workers' seizure of power in the advanced capitalist countries—end imperialism forever. Trotsky noted in a 1924 speech to the Communist University for Toilers of the East, "There will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker."

Today, after capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, the key to the social liberation of the peoples of Afghanistan and the region is in the proletariat of countries like Pakistan, Iran, India and the former Soviet Central Asian republics. Afghanistan also shares a border with the People's Republic of China—and this is of no little account in the appetites of the United States for a military presence in the area. A key strategy of the imperialists today is the counterrevolutionary crusade to restore capitalist rule in China.

The overthrow of capitalism and the achievement of a collectivized economy in China, established as a result of the 1949 Revolution, were a huge step forward for the Chinese masses, not least its women. We defend the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state unconditionally against counterrevolution from abroad or internally, and call for a proletarian political revolution there to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy and bring the program of socialist internationalism to power.

Domestic Consequences of the Anti-Soviet War Drive

Late last summer, the *New York Times* magazine (23 August) ran a special issue entitled "Saving the World's Women." I knew the minute I set eyes on it that it would be full of lies and hypocrisy, all aiming to dress up U.S. imperialism as a force for good around the world. The new supposed vehicle for global women's rights is cheap loans—microfinance and microlending programs—passing out a few dollars so that women can start an embroidery business or some such. After making their profits off the labor of the exploited, the capitalists will now drop a few pennies on their way to the bank. Disgusting.

In an interview in the *Times* magazine titled "A New Gender Agenda," Obama's secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, who is pitched as an "ambassador" of women's rights, speaks these true words: "Women die every minute from poor maternal health care. You know, H.I.V./AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria—those are all, unfortunately, equal-opportunity killers. Maternal health is a woman's issue; it's a family issue; it's a child issue." A few miles away from Clinton's elegant Washington office lie the impoverished ghettos where the black masses of the capital live. But we don't hear these statistics: One in five American children live in poverty, the highest rate in the industrialized West. Nearly eleven million have no health insurance. Hundreds of thousands are in foster care. More than 1.5 million are homeless. The infant mortality rates in the inner cities of Washington, D.C., New Haven, East St. Louis and Chicago rival that of Malaysia.

This is attributable to the lack of health care available to poor women as well as their generalized poverty. The U.S. has the widest gap in the entire world in the standard of living between rich and poor. It's virtually the only developed country that has no universal medical coverage. Obama's proposed health care package promises a level of care not much above a pledge to pick up the dead bodies, in order to massively cut health care costs. The budget will be balanced largely by taxing the hard-won health care plans of unionized workers and slashing Medicare payments. Restoring the profitability and competitive edge of U.S. imperialism, where health care costs are the highest and the health of the population the worst in the advanced industrialized countries, is the reality behind the "health care reform" game.

Hillary Clinton certainly voiced no concern about the status of women in the U.S. To oppressed black women in the hell that is the American ghettos, Clinton, her boss, Barack Obama, and the Democratic Party preach the standard mythology of the American ruling class that if you're poor and haven't made it, it's your own fault. You should pull yourself up by your bootstraps and *earn* a decent standard of living. The lie of the "post-racial" America can be joined by the lie of the post-sexist America.

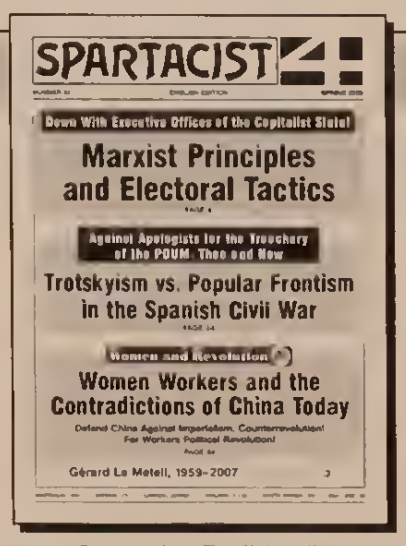
The Bourgeoisie's Assault on Abortion Rights

In his speech to the joint session of Congress on September 9, Obama was explicit in his disavowal of defending the rights of women and immigrants in his health care reform proposal: "The reforms I'm proposing would not apply to those who are here illegally. And one more misunderstanding I want to clear up...no federal dollars will be used to fund abortions, and federal conscience laws will remain in place."

Ever since the passage of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, the basic democratic right of legal abortion has been under attack. As revolutionary communists, we defend every gain that's been won for the exploited and oppressed. Abortion is a politically explosive issue because it raises the question of the equality of women. Providing women with some control over whether or not to have children, abortion is viewed as a threat to the institution of the family.

The arsenal of legal measures on the federal as well as the state level has made abortion virtually inaccessible to a large number of women. Thirty-eight states prohibit abortions after a specified point in pregnancy. Fully 35 states require one or both parents of women under 18 to be notified and/or consent to an abortion. Some 87 percent of U.S. counties and 31 percent of metropolitan areas have no abortion services. Abortion clinics are now outnumbered by "crisis pregnancy centers"—fake clinics set up by anti-abortion groups whose purpose is to subject pregnant women to anti-abortion propaganda and otherwise pressure them to carry the fetus to term. According to the *Nation*, some 4,000 of these centers have received over $60 million in federal abstinence and marriage-promotion funds.

On May 31 the bloody war against women's right to abortion waged by "right to life" terrorists claimed yet another life. Dr. George Tiller—one of only three doctors whose clinics provide late-term abortions in the United States—was assassinated while attending his church in Wichita, Kansas. A right-wing anti-abortion bigot has been arrested in the case. Tiller himself had been a main target of the "pro-life" God squad for decades. In 1991, tens of thousands of "Operation Rescue" fanatics blockaded his clinic for six weeks. They campaigned—successfully—to have him prosecuted; boycotted his suppliers; tailed him with hidden cameras; branded him "Tiller the baby killer"; hit him with lawsuits, legislation and regulatory complaints; and protested relentlessly, even at



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his church. Some sent death threats. One bombed his clinic. Another tried to kill him in 1993, firing five shots, wounding him in both arms.

In Tiller's own words: "Make no mistake, this battle is about self-determination by women of the direction and course of their lives and their family's lives. Abortion is about women's hopes and dreams. Abortion is a matter of survival for women." His commitment to this fight is best exemplified by his statement, "If a stake has to be driven through the heart of the anti-abortion movement, I want to have my hand on the hammer." We honor Dr. George Tiller, who was murdered for his courageous stand for women's rights.

Tiller is the eighth person murdered in this anti-abortion, "family values" onslaught since 1993. On September 1 the *Washington Post* reported that doctors trained in and practicing abortion are becoming extinct in the U.S. There is a justifiable fear of the high probability that they and their families, friends, coworkers would be subjected to harassment, violence and death.

Anti-Abortion Laws: Weapon of Church and State

The regulation of abortion and contraception has historically been a powerful weapon in the hands of organized religion and the state. Even the most cursory examination of the laws, going back thousands of years, about miscarriage, abortion, contraception and the like, shows that they are integrally related to the institution of the family. Laws from ancient Egypt to Sumer to Rome were concerned with abortion and contraception, mainly to defend a man's right to have children and heirs. In *Eve's Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West*, John Riddle traces the development of the religious and legal attitudes toward contraception and abortion (though some of his conclusions on pre-industrial contraception and abortion techniques are controversial). He says, for example, "Deliberate abortion in the Old Testament is not mentioned, only injury by a third party resulting once again in a man being denied progeny he sired. And, in keeping with the same principles, no compensation is due the women injured. Hebrew law protected the family and the position of the father as its ruling head. According to Talmudic interpretation, the fetus was the property of the father."

UPI

Ronald Reagan meets with reactionary Afghan *mujahedin* at White House, 1983.

Modern abortion laws show how social and legal institutions changed to reflect the interests of the capitalist class. In 1803 the Ellenhorough Act was the advent of abortion as a statutory crime in the English-speaking world. The preoccupations of the ruling class with this law and others following it are revealed as protecting the male's right to heirs, punishing (especially single) women for illicit sex and protecting population growth. More children must be born for the growth of the capitalist nation-state, its army and working population.

From Carter to Reagan: Resurgence of the Religious Right

The source of anti-woman bigotry in the U.S. is not the particular capitalist party in power—whether Democratic or Republican—but the capitalist order that breeds oppression and bigotry as a necessary corollary to its system of exploitation. The emergence of the religious right in the late 1970s as the ideological leaders of the anti-sex witchhunt was integrally tied to the overall political and economic interests of U.S. imperialism at the time. Coming to office in 1977, the Democratic Carter administration kicked off an onslaught of domestic social reaction and a renewal of U.S. imperialism's Cold War drive to destroy the Soviet Union, garbed in the call for "human rights." The CIA's war in Afghanistan was a key part of this.

Carter's domestic policies reflected the attempt of the American ruling class to overcome widespread fear and loathing of the government following the explosive years of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, the rise of the New Left, the women's liberation movement and black radicalization, and finally the Watergate break-in that forced the resignation of Republican president Richard Nixon in 1974. For the American bourgeoisie, this all-sided social turmoil and defiance of authority were deeply disturbing, and the potential for an alliance of black militants and radicalized students with an increasingly restive labor movement was a threat that had to be stopped. Thus a major bourgeois ideological assault was launched to overcome the "Vietnam syndrome" and to instill an unquestioning acceptance of "free enterprise," God and "family values," including the desirability of dying for one's country.

The Carter administration brought "born again" religious fundamentalism front and center into the White House. This was the national backdrop for an anti-sex witchhunt that cut a very wide swath: not only abortion was targeted but gay rights—for example, Anita Bryant's "Save Our Children" anti-gay campaign of hate. Roman Polanski was first arrested at this time in the still ongoing 30-year witchhunt of this man. Under Reagan, all this rolled into a vicious persecution of AIDS patients, while day-care workers were targeted and jailed as "child molesters" in hysterical allegations of "satanic ritual abuse."

As communists we oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated or decreed so-called "norms." The guiding principle for sexual relations between people should be that of effective consent—that is, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion. All consensual relations are purely the concern of the individuals involved, and the state has no business interfering in human sexual activity.

Our Intervention

Our party intervened heavily into the 1970s movement for abortion rights, dominated by the Socialist Workers Party's front group, WONAAC, which in tried-and-true reformist fashion kept its "single-issue" campaign within the political limits acceptable to Democrats. In sharp contrast, we fought for a program of women's liberation through socialist revolution and pointed out that without the means to pay, "choice" is no choice. The wealthy will always get their medical care and their abortions, while the myriad anti-abortion laws target young, working-class and poor women, who can't afford quality health care, childcare and housing. We raised the call for *free abortion on demand* as part of *free, quality health care for all* and *free, 24-hour childcare* to address the deep race and class oppression of poor and minority women.

Reuters

Democratic president Bill Clinton signing 1996 bill to "end welfare as we know it."

In 1991, when Operation Rescue launched its "Summer of Mercy," we participated in clinic defense actions across the country. At the same time, we criticized the feminists and the reformist left for calling for government defense of abortion facilities and for more "pro-choice" capitalist politicians and Supreme Court judges. We have always emphasized that only the power of social struggle, particularly by the organized labor movement, can force the capitalist class into actions it would prefer to avoid. We called for mass mobilizations, bolstered by the power of labor, to defend the clinics and make a show of strength in support of women's rights.

But when Bill Clinton became president in 1993—another one of those Democrats who think abortion is a tragedy that should be rare—well, then, the feminists dusted off their hands and went home, because he passed the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act in 1994. Let me point out two things that happened during Clinton's eight years in office that massively affected women: safe access to abortion was gutted as the number of abortion providers plummeted 14 percent between 1992 and 1996, and a huge number of laws chipping away abortion rights, including parental consent regulations targeting teenagers, were passed. And Clinton ended "welfare as we know it," gutting welfare benefits in an assault against poor and black women and their children.

Today, various feminist and leftist organizations are again raising defense of the clinics in the aftermath of the killing of George Tiller. But it's the same reformist game here. Operation Rescue has targeted a clinic in Nebraska for harassment. Says a spokesperson for the National Organization For Women (NOW): "As we prepare to stand in peaceful support of women's rights in Nebraska, we know that every clinic in the United States is a potential target. I call on the Obama administration to respond to this threat using the strongest means possible, to prosecute the criminals, their funders and their co-conspirators, and to protect every provider, worker and patient across this nation."

NOW makes no pretense to being a socialist organization, so it's consistent that they call on the government—the very agency whose job it is to enforce the social order that breeds oppression—to defend women's rights. But ostensible socialists are supposed to stand for something else. Yet the Socialist Workers Party's *Militant* (7 September), writing on the Nebraska action, quotes without a word of criticism another passage from that very same NOW statement I just read you.

"Fight the Right and Stand Up for Choice," says the ISO's *Socialist Worker* (29 September). This is a blatant appeal to the Democratic Party, the "right" being the Republicans. In their theoretical journal, *International Socialist Review* (July-August 2009), they have an article titled: "Defending Abortion Rights: On the Need for a New Movement." A classless "grassroots" movement is the ISO's answer to everything. In this case they are presented with a bit of a problem: the first main point in the article is to "prove" that there is no anti-abortion movement of religious bigots. The ISO calls the anti-abortion crusade "smoke and mirrors." I wish it was.

You can't expect an organization that cheered the capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR to understand the profound roots in the capitalist order of this anti-woman crusade. The ISO does not believe in the ability of the working class to defend women's rights any more than in its ability to overthrow the capitalist order, found its own government and establish a planned, collectivized economy. Today the ISO is even printing contributions to a debate: "Should the left call for Taliban victory?" They can see supporting the Taliban—but the Red Army, never.

Clinics closing, doctors and staff killed, abortion rights massively losing support among an increasingly religious population—it's a depressing spectacle. What about mobilizing the power of the labor movement to defend women's rights? It's a fine idea, and we're for it. But the pro-capitalist bureaucrats in the unions have notoriously remained silent on abortion rights—indeed any rights—for women. And these days they can't even defend their own members' wages—witness UAW president Gettelfinger giving away the store to the GM bosses. Why? It's political. The union bureaucrats uphold the partnership of capital and labor and preach reliance on "lesser evil" politicians. But we Marxists know that the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are irreconcilable enemies in the basic functioning of the economy and in the historic interests of the emancipation of the human race. Workers can win even the most basic reforms and even the most basic defensive struggles only through hard class combat.

Let's make it concrete. Take a look at the company that everyone loves to hate: Wal-Mart, the world's largest profit-making enterprise. The immediate thought that might come to your mind of the connection between Wal-Mart and the status of women would, no doubt, be the ongoing class action suit brought by some 1.6 million women employees against the anti-union behemoth. But the connection goes far deeper than the company's discrimination against women employees and its grotesque corporate culture of repulsive male chauvinism. There's a very interesting book, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise*, published this summer, that details the earlier history of Wal-Mart through the 1990s and its social and political links in the country. In fact—although the author certainly doesn't share our Marxist outlook—the book reveals details proving the truth of our longstanding analysis of

continued on page 10

Women and Revolution

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League/U.S.

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Women's Rights...

(continued from page 9)

the genesis of the religious right in the United States. It's a concrete illustration of the way that the bourgeoisie controls society through a million threads, weaving into the very fabric of the country.

Wal-Mart, particularly through its founder Sam Walton, was a key player in the rise of the Christian New Right in the U.S.: it funded evangelical colleges, campaigned for "family values" and free enterprise, and participated in targeting for annihilation gay rights and abortion rights as overriding "sins." And not least, it founded a scholarship program in 1985 to combat the influence of Communism in Central America—this at the behest of the Reagan administration as it backed its blood-drenched allies like the Salvadoran dictatorship.

Wal-Mart also played a key role in the passage of the NAFTA "free trade" agreement in 1994; it was no coincidence that its first store outside the borders of the U.S. was built in Mexico City in 1993. This American "free trade" rape of Mexico was a major factor in intensifying the impoverishment of the Mexican masses. And yet the American trade-union bureaucracy denounced NAFTA on the basis of poisonous protectionism: saving "American jobs." Meanwhile, Wal-Mart remains virulently anti-union in every country around the world. Especially in the United States, the fight to organize Wal-Mart is critical to the labor movement as a whole. But instead of waging this fight, the labor tops offer up virulent anti-Mexican chauvinism and protectionism, which posits foreign workers—not the capitalist bosses—as the enemy.

Wal-Mart is also one of the largest buyers of China's "free market" exports. The union bureaucrats respond with China-bashing, doing double duty by pushing anti-Communism and scapegoating another "foreign enemy." This China-bashing serves the U.S. imperialists in the counterrevolutionary crusade.

Organizing Wal-Mart would also entail taking head-on the active defense of immigrant rights and the fight for black freedom. These are crucial components of any labor struggle and are equally eschewed by a labor bureaucracy that is committed to the maintenance of the capitalist system. Today, it's our job as Marxists to struggle to bring the fight for worldwide proletarian revolution to the working class, which necessarily means the indivisible fight for *all* the exploited and oppressed. In the words of Lenin, we revolutionaries seek to be *"the tribune of the people*...able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalise all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth *before all* his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for *all* and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat."

Karl Marx's classic definition of communism is "from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs"—that is our goal. The woman question is a very powerful lens through which to see this goal. We are for a society where everyone can fulfill their potential in a materially abundant world where want puts no limits on human development. In this world, a woman will be able to have children (or not) with the full support of society, including contraception, abortion, childcare, medical care, time off from work and every other thing she might need.

We are a very long way from that day. But I hope that by putting it in the context of the international situation and the broader struggle for human liberation that you have a perspective beyond the immediate horizon. We are in a trough right now where the class struggle is mainly on the side of the class enemy, conditioned by the world-historic defeat in the capitalist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. But there's one thing you can be sure of: it will change. And when the working class again begins to flex its muscle and to move onto the stage of history, we revolutionaries will be there, fighting for the program of communist revolution. We Trotskyists fight to build a multiracial vanguard party of the type built by the Bolshevik leaders Lenin and Trotsky, which led the world's first socialist revolution in October 1917. In a communist future, women will be fully and equally integrated into society, and anti-woman violence and bigotry, the reactionary constraints of family and religion, and the repressive role of the capitalist state will all be but barbaric memories of the past.■

Appeal...

(continued from page 12)

prisoners had parole hearings, but none were released.

Jaan Laaman and **Thomas Manning** are the two remaining anti-imperialist activists known as the Ohio 7 still in prison. They were convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings of symbols of U.S. imperialism, such as military and corporate offices, in the late 1970s and '80s. Before their arrests in 1984 and 1985, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts. Their children were kidnapped at gunpoint by the Feds.

The Ohio 7's politics were once shared by thousands of radicals during the Vietnam antiwar movement and by New Leftists who wrote off the possibility of winning the working class to a revolutionary program and saw themselves as an auxiliary of Third World liberation movements. But, like the Weathermen before them, the Ohio 7 were spurned by the "respectable" left. From a proletarian standpoint, the actions of these leftist activists against imperialism and racist injustice are not a crime. They should not have served a day in prison.

Ed Poindexter and **Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa** are former Black Panther supporters and leaders of the Omaha, Nebraska, National Committee to Combat Fascism. They were victims of the FBI's deadly COINTELPRO operation under which 38 Black Panther Party members were killed and hundreds more imprisoned on frame-up charges. Poindexter and Mondo were railroaded to prison and sentenced to life for a 1970 explosion that killed a cop, and they have now served more than 37 years in jail. This year, the Nebraska Supreme Court denied Poindexter a new trial despite the fact that a crucial piece of evidence excluded from the original trial, a long-suppressed 911 audio tape, proved that testimony of the state's key witness was perjured.

Hugo Pinell is the last of the San Quentin 6 still in prison. He was a militant anti-racist leader of prison rights organizing along with George Jackson, his comrade and mentor, who was gunned down by prison guards in 1971. Despite numerous letters of support and no disciplinary write-ups for over 28 years, Pinell was again denied parole this year. Now in his 60s, Pinell continues to serve a life sentence at the notorious Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit in California.

Jamal Hart, Mumia's son, was sentenced in 1998 to 15½ years without parole on bogus firearms possession charges. Hart was targeted for his prominent activism in the campaign to free his father. Although Hart was initially charged under Pennsylvania law, which would have meant a probationary sentence, Clinton's Justice Department intervened to have Hart thrown into prison under federal law. The U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals has turned down Hart's *habeas corpus* petition, and he has faced myriad bureaucratic obstacles and racist targeting throughout his incarceration.

Contribute now! All proceeds from the Holiday Appeal will go to the Class-War Prisoners Stipend Fund. Send your contributions to: PDC, P.O. Box 99, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 406-4252.■

Twenty-Fourth Annual

Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners

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Chicago
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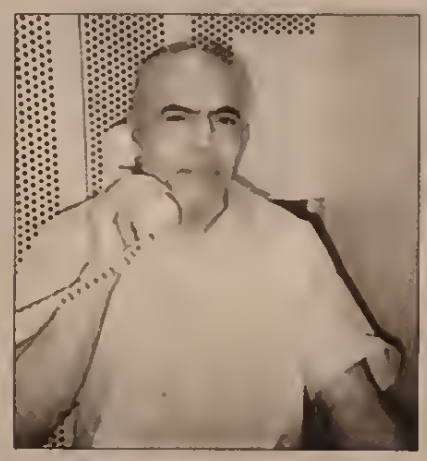


Clockwise from top left: Hugo Pinell, Jaan Laaman, Tom Manning, Ed Poindexter, Jamal Hart.

Credits, clockwise from top left: hugopinell.org; 4strugglemag (2); Richardson/Boston Progressive Examiner; Monique Code

Philly...

(continued from page 12)

known as the "workshop of the world," public sector jobs are one of the few opportunities left to make a decent living, not least for minorities.

Notably the strike foiled a ploy to link health care costs to the details of whatever legislation might emerge from Congress and headed off the shredding of seniority-based job "picking rights." At the same time, although Brown vowed that the strikers would "stay out as long as it takes to secure our pension," pension contributions were nearly doubled from 2 percent of base pay to 3.5 percent, partly offsetting a modest raise spread out over the five-year contract. In addition, there is a new cap on pension benefits and SEPTA did not open its books on what happened to their pension funds.

Union members told *Workers Vanguard* that Local 234 will sue the transit agency to get an audit. In fact, the union was in a far better position when it was on strike to get the company to open its books. Instead, the union tops are relying on the capitalist courts, which is a reflection of their pro-capitalist program.

At the same time, cops were welcomed on the picket lines. Illusions sown by the labor bureaucracy in the courts and cops—integral parts of the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state—undermine the ability of the union to fight. The role of the police is to break strikes, defend the bosses' profits and enforce racist injustice, such as the frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal, an innocent man and victim of a political vendetta.

Strikers suggested to *WV* that the union should raise the prospect of arbitration to pressure the transit bosses to negotiate. In fact, binding arbitration is a *trap* for workers. Arbitrators put forward a "neutral" face the better to mask their role as agents of the capitalist state charged with forcing through anti-union settlements. When arbitrators this year provided workers in New York City and D.C. transit with meager "rewards" going beyond what the bosses considered acceptable, management moved to reverse the decisions in the courts.

In Philadelphia, pensions are the sticking point in stalled negotiations with the city workers in AFSCME District Councils 33 and 47. Nutter is gunning for $25 million annually in givebacks. Also working without a contract are members of United Transportation Union Local 1594, which represents about 340 vehicle operators in SEPTA's suburban Victory Division. The Local 234 strike has emboldened these workers, with the *Philadelphia Inquirer* observing, "The SEPTA strike may have been just a curtain-raiser to a bigger act of labor strife." It would have best advanced the class struggle if the TWU and the city's other unions had undertaken joint, coordinated action.

Philadelphia has a history of combative city workers strikes, and many TWU members are veterans of multiple strikes. But Philly is also infamous for its racist repression. What is needed is a class-struggle leadership that mobilizes labor's power, at the head of all the oppressed, against the bosses and their state, taking up the struggle against racist oppression and emblazoning such causes as the fight to free Mumia on labor's banner. Working people should have a party that fights for *their* class interests, a multiracial workers party committed to overturning this whole system of capitalist exploitation and establishing a workers government.

We reprint below a leaflet issued by the New York City Spartacist League and distributed with *WV* on the picket lines.

* * *

NOVEMBER 3—After working since mid-March without a contract, some 5,100 members of Transport Workers Union Local 234 went on strike early this morning, bringing Philadelphia's subways, buses and trolleys to a halt right after the World Series shifted back to New York City. The strikers are taking on a hard-nosed employer, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority, which has been actively backed by a coterie of Democratic Party officials, from Mayor Michael Nutter to Governor Ed Rendell. With the city's transit system averaging more than 928,000 trips each weekday, the impact of the walkout was immediate, prompting the transit bosses and capitalist politicians to cry foul. Rendell called the strike "irresponsible" while Nutter denounced it as "an outrageous action."

SEPTA's insistence on foisting benefit and work-rule concessions on the TWU comes in the context of a broader offensive by the ruling class. Whether in the form of the gutting of the United Auto Workers union under the "bailout" deal brokered by the Obama administration, the steady climb in unemployment or government cutbacks, working people have been made to pay for the capitalist economic crisis. For its part, SEPTA has raided the underfunded union pension plan and is offering a meager pay raise well below inflation—even as it has collected new state funding and over $200 million in federal stimulus money. From New York to California and elsewhere, city and public workers have been under attack. It's high time that labor waged some class struggle against these assaults. If successful, the Philly transit workers strike, the 9th since 1975, would be a victory for all working people.

Management also wants "flexibility" in work rules—i.e., speedup and job elimination—and to tear up "picking rights," the right to choose work assignments based on seniority, which would give it a free hand to discriminate against minority workers and union militants. In the "city of brotherly love," such discrimination is nothing new. In fact, SEPTA's predecessor fought the TWU's organizing drive in the mid 1940s by attempting to incite a racist backlash. Rendell, a major force in the Democratic Party nationally, was the D.A. who framed up former Black Panther and MOVE supporter Mumia Abu-Jamal.

TWU Local 234 must actively reach out to Philadelphia's black and Latino population, which is subjected to grinding poverty and brutal police repression, as well as the rest of city labor and regional transit workers. The unions' support to the capitalist Democratic Party is counterposed to the interests of labor. There must be no reliance on capitalist politicians, whether Democratic or Republican, the cops or the courts—all enemies of the working class. A hard-fought struggle could help spark a wider fight by the labor movement. What is needed is a fight for jobs for all at union wages, for free mass transit and free health care for all and for labor/black mobilizations against racist attacks. ***Victory to the transit workers strike!*** ■

Medical Science...

(continued from page 3)

"the belief that life involves some spiritual essence beyond chemistry or physics." Purging through violent emetics and copious bleeding were common treatments. George Washington is only the most famous American to be killed by his doctors: in the hours before his death, he was drained of half his blood!

As sociologist Paul Starr notes in his 1984 book, *The Social Transformation of American Medicine*, historians point out that homeopathy and other "medical" sects "grew in the mid-nineteenth century because of the inadequacy of contemporary medicine, particularly the disastrous errors of 'heroic therapy,' which emphasized bleeding, heavy doses of mercury, and other modes of treatment now believed to range from the ineffective to the lethal." At that time homeopathic therapy may well have been better than mainstream medicine: a treatment that is pure water at least will not poison the patient, as did calomel, antimony and belladonna, all popular tonics of the time.

In fact, American medicine in the mid 19th century was far behind its British and other European counterparts. As Dr. Dan Agin points out in *Junk Science* (2006):

> "In 1875, there were 460 'medical schools' in the United States (nearly four times as many as now), most of them diploma mills whose main function was to collect tuition fees. Students took courses consisting of two four-month or six-month terms at approximately $60 a term, and often the second term was a verbatim repetition of the first term. . . . In 1869, the dean of Harvard Medical School explained that the medical school had no written examinations because 'a majority of the students cannot write well enough'."

In the early years of the American Medical Association, its opposition to homeopathy was primarily motivated by a search for higher prestige and income. Nonetheless, the AMA's main purpose was to improve the wretched state of medical education. Such medical professionalization was important and necessary. At the same time, the class, sex and race bias of capitalist society also meant that women, blacks and others were kept out of the practice of medicine.

1880 cartoon by Thomas Nast titled: "The Quack's Main(e) Dose—That Will Cure or Kill."

The AMA later reconciled with the homeopaths over the fight to establish government licensing laws and regulation on the medical profession, and the opposition to homeopaths joining the AMA was dropped. But political squabbles continued to consume the AMA, and in 1886 the more scientifically minded members split off to form a separate learned association. In the 1930s, the AMA and homeopathic practitioners joined in their opposition to social insurance for health care, as described by Dr. Stephen Barrett of Quackwatch.com, which exposes medical and pseudoscientific quackery.

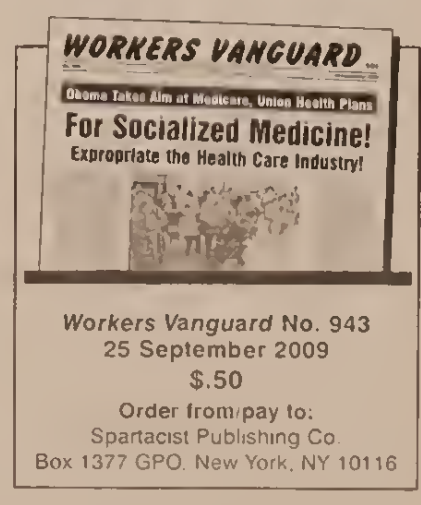
With the establishment of medical science—especially with the discovery of the germ theory of disease—the distinction between homeopathic quackery and real medicine became abundantly clear. What we know today in terms of science and medicine far outstrips what was known a century ago, and there is much more to learn, understand and discover; doubtless the knowledge of scientists in the next century will far outstrip ours. That said, science-based medicine has already "revolutionized medical practice, transforming it from an industry of charlatans and incompetents into a system of healthcare that can deliver such miracles as transplanting kidneys, removing cataracts, combating childhood diseases, eradicating smallpox and saving literally millions of lives each year," as described by Simon Singh and Edzard Ernst in *Trick or Treatment: The Undeniable Facts About Alternative Medicine* (W. W. Norton, 2008). Advances in public health such as immunizations, closed sewage systems and clean drinking water brought about enormous leaps in human health and longevity.

Any medical practitioner who professes to follow Samuel Hahnemann's mystical principles of homeopathy is a menace to the public. Yet, astonishingly, homeopathic medications are protected under the federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act of 1938!

But scientific medicine is also not enough. Medicine for profit rations health care by class, race, sex and ethnicity, reserving the best care for the wealthy. The capitalist class can largely be blamed for the gullibility of the public: high costs place health care beyond the reach of many, and out of despair, many turn to something that promises miracles. Contributing to this problem is ignorance of the principles of science on the part of a population stripped of access to decent public education. As part of free, quality health care for all, a workers government would educate all in human biology and the principles of public health.

"Intelligent design" (i.e., creationism), medical quackery, anti-vaccine hysteria, religious delusions—these plagues are inherent to the capitalist order, which seeks to justify oppression and exploitation and to imbue the masses with superstition and submission to authority. As Marxists, we put forward a materialist understanding of reality, one based on scientific evidence and research. Marx famously called religion the "opium of the people," and continued: "To abolish religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is to demand their *real* happiness. The demand to give up the existing state of affairs is the demand to give up a state of affairs which needs illusion."

Key to casting off such conditions is science. As Robert Park noted: "What science is learning about the laws that govern the universe gives us the power to transform the world into the closest thing to paradise that any of us will ever see. This knowledge did not come from sacred texts, or the revelations of prophets. Science is the only way of knowing—everything else is just superstition." In a world communist society—where social classes and all forms of oppression are part of a distant, barbaric past—mankind will finally be able to put into place the power of science in the service of all humanity. ■



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WORKERS VANGUARD

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Free All Class-War Prisoners!

Build PDC Holiday Appeal

> "The path to freedom leads through a prison. The door swings in and out and through that door passes a steady procession of 'those fools too stubborn-willed to bend,' who will not turn aside from the path because prisons obstruct it here and there."
>
> —James P. Cannon, "The Cause that Passes Through a Prison," *Labor Defender*, September 1926

Twenty-four years ago, the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League—revived a key tradition of the International Labor Defense under James P. Cannon, its founder and first secretary: sending monthly stipends to those "stubborn-willed" class-war prisoners condemned to capitalism's dungeons for standing up against racist capitalist repression. We are again holding Holiday Appeal benefits to raise funds for this unique program, calling particular attention to the fight to free America's foremost class-war prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal, who remains on death row in Pennsylvania.

Our forebear, Cannon, also affirmed a basic principle that should be no less applicable today: "The class-conscious worker accords to the class-war prisoners a place of singular honor and esteem.... The victory of the class-war prisoners is possible only when they are inseparably united with the living labor movement and when that movement claims them for its own, takes up their battle cry and carries on their work."

The PDC calls on labor activists, fighters for black and immigrant rights and defenders of civil liberties to join us in donating to and building the annual Holiday Appeal. An injury to one is an injury to all! We print below brief descriptions of the 16 class-war prisoners who receive monthly stipends from the PDC, many of whom were denied parole over the last year for refusing to express "remorse" for acts they did not commit!

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a former Black Panther Party spokesman, a well-known supporter of the MOVE organization and an award-winning journalist known as "the voice of the voiceless." This past April, the U.S. Supreme Court summarily threw out Mumia's efforts to overturn his frame-up conviction based on the racist exclusion of black jurors from his 1982 trial. Ominously, this same court has yet to rule on the prosecution's petition to reinstate the death penalty. The Philadelphia district attorney's office states that, whatever the Supreme Court decides, it will continue to push for Mumia's execution.

COC Productions

Ben Corbett

Class-war prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal and Leonard Peltier.

December 9 is the 28th anniversary of Mumia's arrest for a killing that the cops know he did not commit. Mumia was framed up for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner and sentenced to death explicitly for his political views. Mountains of evidence proving Mumia's innocence, including the sworn confession of Arnold Beverly that he, not Mumia, shot and killed Faulkner, have been submitted to the courts. But to the racists in black robes, a court of law is no place for evidence of the innocence of this fighter for the oppressed.

While others plead with the current U.S. president and his attorney general to "investigate" violations of Mumia's "civil rights," the PDC says that Mumia's fate cannot be left in the hands of the government of the capitalists. The racist rulers hate Mumia because they see in him the spectre of black revolt. The stakes are high and the situation is grim, but any real fight for Mumia's freedom must be based on a class-struggle opposition to the capitalist rulers, who have entombed this innocent black man for more than half his life.

Leonard Peltier is an internationally renowned class-war prisoner. Peltier's incarceration for his activism in the American Indian Movement has come to symbolize this country's racist repression of its native peoples, the survivors of centuries of genocidal oppression. Peltier's frame-up trial, for the 1975 deaths of two marauding FBI agents in what had become a war zone on the South Dakota Pine Ridge Reservation, shows what capitalist "justice" is all about. Although the lead government attorney has admitted "We can't prove who shot those agents" and the courts have acknowledged blatant prosecutorial misconduct, the 65-year-old Peltier is still locked away. Outrageously, in August, the U.S. Parole Commission again turned down Peltier's parole request and coldbloodedly declared they would not reconsider his case for another 15 years.

Eight MOVE members—**Chuck Africa, Michael Africa, Dehhie Africa, Janet Africa, Janine Africa, Delbert Africa, Eddie Africa** and **Phil Africa**—are in their 32nd year of prison. They were sentenced to 30-100 years after the 8 August 1978 siege of their Philadelphia home by over 600 heavily armed cops, having been falsely convicted of killing a police officer who died in the cops' own cross fire. In 1985, eleven of their MOVE family members, including five children, were massacred by Philly cops. This year, again, after more than three decades of unjust incarceration, nearly all of these innocent

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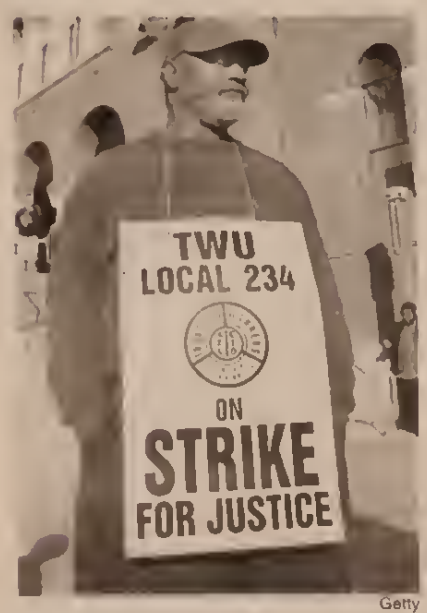
In Face of Offensive by SEPTA Bosses, Democrats

Philly Transit Strikers Stood Firm



Getty

Striking SEPTA worker, November 3.

For six days earlier this month, a solid strike by the members of Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 234 shut down public transit in Philadelphia, one of the largest systems in the U.S. Here was a union willing to fight despite the tough economic times, setting an example for city workers and others who face cutbacks. The walkout held off an offensive by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) bosses and capitalist Democratic Party politicians, with the union getting a contract after months and months of management foot-dragging. However, the union leadership gave ground on the key issue of pensions in the settlement, which is slated for a membership vote on November 20.

The union had warned it might strike just before the World Series games played in Philadelphia. But TWU officials kept the membership on the job after Democratic governor Ed Rendell threatened "significant consequences" if a strike occurred then. Once the strike began, Rendell, joined by black Democratic mayor Michael Nutter, sought to whip up anti-union sentiment by spreading misinformation and making the cynical claim that the strike was hurting the city's working population. When negotiations broke down during the strike, Rendell sought to take away some $7 million in state funds meant to pay for a signing bonus unless the membership immediately voted on the bosses' terms, circumventing the Local 234 leadership.

The role of the Democratic Party politicians during the strike starkly demonstrated that these representatives of the class enemy are no "friends of labor." However, while denouncing Rendell and Nutter—who was dubbed a "Little Caesar" by Local 234 president Willie Brown—TWU officials embrace "good" Democrats. This included supporting the election of Barack Obama, who has handed out hundreds of billions of dollars to the banks amid mounting foreclosures and joblessness. One local Democrat widely praised for brokering the strike settlement is Congressman Bob Brady. The main interest of this liberal politician was not in getting a better deal for union members but rather in maintaining "labor peace," as he made clear in a TV interview: "This strike has to be over."

Bourgeois media coverage of the strike was a constant barrage of anti-union propaganda, depicting the strikers as "greedy" at a time when many people are being thrown out on the streets. What a sham! Hardly short on cash, SEPTA has a long history of demanding concessions from the union at every turn, boom or bust. Layoffs, benefit slashing and recurring economic crises are all features of the capitalist economic system, where the owners of the means of production make profits off the toil of the working class. In a deindustrialized city like Philly, once

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WORKERS VANGUARD

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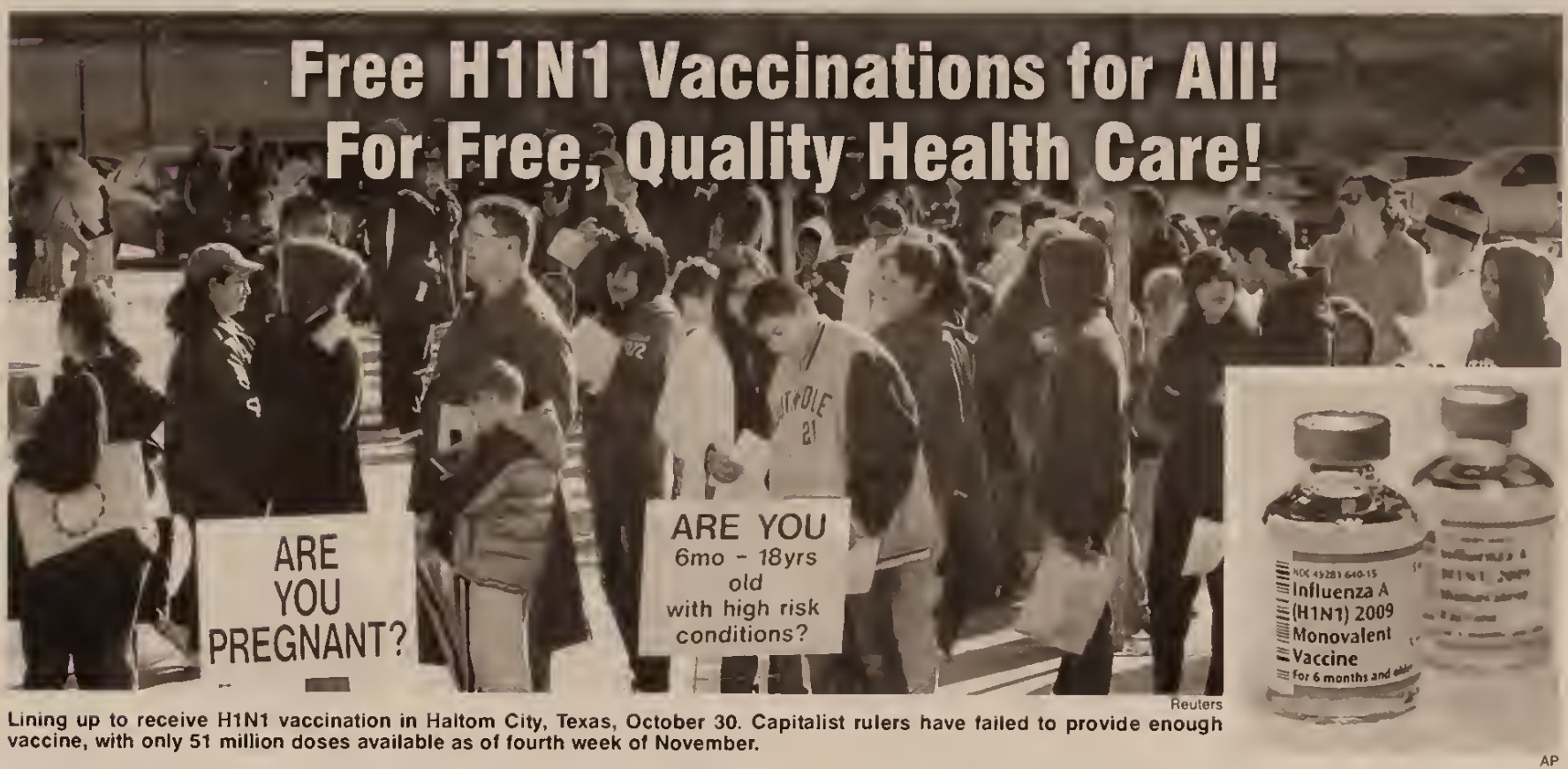
No. 948 — GCU C-701 — 4 December 2009

In Defense of Medical Science

Capitalist Reaction and Anti-Vaccine Hysteria



Reuters

AP

Lining up to receive H1N1 vaccination in Haltom City, Texas, October 30. Capitalist rulers have failed to provide enough vaccine, with only 51 million doses available as of fourth week of November.

Since the outbreak of "swine flu" or Novel influenza A (H1N1) in Mexico in April, the virus has spread to over 200 countries killing at least 7,800 people, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). In the U.S., as of mid-October at least 22 million have contracted the virus and some 4,000 have died, including 540 children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). But in spite of the threat posed by the H1N1 virus, the capitalist rulers, indifferent to the health and welfare of working people and the poor, have dismally failed to provide the front-line measure against the epidemic—vaccination. Seven months after the initial outbreak, after numerous warnings by the government and media about the virus's threat, thousands of anxious people across the country lining up for vaccination are simply told to go home because supplies have run out.

Meanwhile, anti-vaccine groups continue to propagate their fear-mongering and reactionary anti-science ideology against vaccination. When the New York State Department of Health briefly mandated seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccinations for health care workers—a measure we Marxists support—anti-vaccine groups seized on the objections of some unions to

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Court Imprisons Leftist Attorney

Free Lynne Stewart, Mohamed Yousry and Ahmed Abdel Sattar!

Reuters

Lynne Stewart salutes supporters in New York City as she arrives at federal court to begin her prison sentence, November 19.

NEW YORK CITY—In a blow against the rights of the entire population, leftist attorney Lynne Stewart was hauled off to prison on November 19 on bogus charges of conspiracy to provide "material support" to terrorism and to "defraud" the U.S. government. An outspoken courtroom advocate for black activists and the poor, the 70-year-old Stewart was convicted in 2005 along with translator Mohamed Yousry and paralegal Ahmed Abdel Sattar on charges stemming from her ardent legal defense of Islamic fundamentalist Egyptian cleric Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, who is serving a life sentence for an alleged plot to blow up NYC landmarks in the early 1990s. Reporting to prison two days after the Second Circuit Court of Appeals turned down the appeal of her conviction, Stewart told her supporters that the government was warning lawyers: "Don't advocate for your clients in a vigorous, strong way or you will end up" like her, "disbarred and in jail."

The victimization of Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar has been a key cog in the government's drive to eviscerate civil liberties in the domestic "war on terror." From beginning to end, the Feds' case was a fabrication. The government admitted that not a single act of violence resulted from the alleged "terror conspiracy." Unable to get Stewart for breaking any law, the government invoked the spectre of "conspiracy" and nailed her for violating Special Administrative Measures that drastically restrict a prisoner's right to communicate with the outside world. Stewart was "guilty" of conveying Abdel Rahman's thoughts about a ceasefire between his Islamic Group and the Egyptian government to a Reuters journalist. The government declared this was tantamount to a terrorist "jailbreak."

In a November 21 protest letter to Attorney General Eric Holder, the Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense

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WV Defends Polanski

Good Job!

10 October 2009

I just got my WV in the mail and saw what I was looking for. Thank you for defending Polanski. These little liberals like Katha Pollitt are like wind up dolls or robots. As with Yugoslavia, and Obama: The ruling class programs them and winds them up, and they start frothing at the mouth, or cheerleading. Disgusting!

Tom

On Steroids Article

Sunday, 15 Nov 2009

The article on baseball and drug use (Nov. 6) was most interesting. The amount of research involved is certainly impressive. A good read.

Irv J.

Cancel Our Subscription!

Oct. 26, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing both to cancel our household's subscription to the Workers Vanguard as well as to request that Spartacist Publications return to us the remaining portion of our subscription money, which is $9.00 [we have received two issues of the Workers Vanguard at $.50 each so far].

My wife and I are deeply disgusted by the "reporting" on the Roman Polanski case in the most recent issue of the Workers Vanguard [9 October 2009], in which a Workers Vanguard writer falsely reported that Polanski had consensual sex with the girl in question. This is contrary to the published account from the actual trial, which recounted, ***according to the victim herself***, Polanski drugging her with Quaaludes—which the article refers to as "fashionable sedatives"—before having ***unwanted*** sex with her. I have no idea what interest the Workers Vanguard has in defending a big-wig like Polanski who clearly thinks he's above the law because of his fame and money, but we are beyond repulsed at the sexist tone of the entire article, which includes referring to the 13 year-old victim as "precocious". Creepy victim-blaming Lolita subtexts, anyone? We are equally alarmed at the random information included about the young woman, such as that she had previously taken Quaaludes and had sex. SO?? This is *classic* victim-blaming, which is only a breath away from outright screaming, "You weren't really raped because you liked underage sex and drugs in the past!!" It is a common silencing technique against women and girls in our culture.

As feminists and as women in general, my wife and I cannot conscionably allow our hard-earned money to go to your publications any longer. Again, please cancel our subscription and send our $9.00 to: Meredith M. [address—ed.]

Sincerely,
Shannon W.
Meredith M.

***WV* replies:**

We usually figure we're doing something right when we get cancelled subscriptions, as, for example, after our article, "Stop Vendetta Against Roman Polanski!" (*WV* No. 944, 9 October), which included a reprint of our 10 February 1978 article on the Polanski case. Two main—and contradictory—objections are raised to our defense of film director Roman Polanski: first, that young people, especially women, are so immature that they can never possibly consent to sex with an older person; second, that despite this immaturity, whatever they may say must be unconditionally believed as the absolute truth. Obviously, we disagree with these liberal and feminist shibboleths, which have done great harm, not least to youth and women.

Democratic rights are indivisible. Thus Polanski, even if he is a rich, famous, white male, has as much right to be listened to as his accuser. What is sneeringly called "random information" about the young woman's sexual activity with her boyfriend and drug use is actually important in assessing what happened. Rape uniquely involves an act the circumstances of which determine whether the act is a crime or voluntary sexual intercourse. In the 1930s case of the Scottsboro Boys—nine black youths falsely accused of raping two white women—it was necessary for the defense to bring up the immediate prior sexual activity of the two women. To deny the legitimacy of such evidence is tantamount to saying that any time a white woman claims a black man raped her, she must be believed—which was indeed how Jim Crow "justice" operated to terrorize black people.

The prosecution's case against Polanski—who after being in prison for two months has finally been granted bail by Swiss authorities for an outrageous $4.5 million—was never believable. Now that the teenager's 1977 grand jury testimony has been splashed all over the Internet, we stand by what we wrote over 30 years ago: "What happened was hardly a case of rape." Grand juries—which determine whether there is enough evidence for a trial—are a weapon of the prosecution where a witness cannot even be cross-examined by the defense. Moreover, the grand jury testimony in Polanski's case "proves" nothing other than that the prosecution's case rested on very shaky ground. In the midst of providing much obviously coached detail (like the year of the champagne she and Polanski were drinking), the young woman at one point admits: "I can barely remember anything that happened." Indeed, all charges against Polanski were dropped except for "unlawful sexual intercourse"—i.e., that he had sex with a minor—to which he pleaded guilty. Now an adult, Samantha Geimer (then Gailey) has come forward several times requesting the prosecution drop its charges against Polanski.

© Guy Ferrandis

Gore Vidal, who was working in the movie industry at the time, recently responded to an interviewer (*Atlantic* online, 28 October) who asked him about Polanski: "Look, am I going to sit and weep every time a young hooker feels as though she's been taken advantage of?... The idea that this girl was in her communion dress, a little angel all in white, being raped by this awful Jew, *Polacko*—that's what people were calling him—well, the story is totally different now from what it was then.... Anti-Semitism got poor Polanski. He was also a foreigner. He did not subscribe to American values in the least. To [his persecutors], that seemed vicious and unnatural." To his interviewer's question as to what are "American values," Vidal responded: "Lying and cheating. There's nothing better."

To which we'd add massive hypocrisy. Youth are ruthlessly prosecuted as adults by the government when it so pleases—including sentencing 13-year-olds to life in prison. Recall the hysterical day-care witchhunts of the Reagan-era 1980s, when as the Reaganites sought to abolish day-care centers for poor and working women, its prosecutors browbeat the poor kids into ever more outrageous stories and whipped up mass hysteria over alleged bunny slaughters, sexual abuse and Satanic rituals, for which, of course, no evidence was ever found.

As to our supposed "victim-blaming Lolita subtext," youth *do* have sexual

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TROTSKY

LENIN

On the Centrality of Marxist Theory

In his classic 1902 work, What Is To Be Done?, *V.I. Lenin polemicized against the Economist tendency in the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, a tendency that limited its agitation to trade-union demands and passively supported bourgeois liberal efforts to reform tsarist absolutism. Against the Economists, who were hostile to Marxism and loosely associated with the reformist current of Eduard Bernstein in Germany, Lenin stressed the centrality of Marxist theory for revolutionaries. Lenin's emphasis on Marxist theory is particularly important in the present post-Soviet period, which is marked by the ascendancy of deep theoretical, political and social reaction.*

Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This idea cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity. Yet, for Russian Social-Democrats [i.e., socialists] the importance of theory is enhanced by three other circumstances, which are often forgotten: first, by the fact that our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming defined, and it has as yet far from settled accounts with the other trends of revolutionary thought that threaten to divert the movement from the correct path. On the contrary, precisely the very recent past was marked by a revival of non-Social-Democratic revolutionary trends (an eventuation regarding which Axelrod long ago warned the Economists). Under these circumstances, what at first sight appears to be an "unimportant" error may lead to most deplorable consequences, and only short-sighted people can consider factional disputes and a strict differentiation between shades of opinion inopportune or superfluous....

Secondly, the Social-Democratic movement is in its very essence an international movement. This means, not only that we must combat national chauvinism, but that an incipient movement in a young country can be successful only if it makes use of the experiences of other countries. In order to make use of these experiences it is not enough merely to be acquainted with them, or simply to copy out the latest resolutions. What is required is the ability to treat these experiences critically and to test them independently....

Thirdly, the national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world. We shall have occasion further on to deal with the political and organisational duties which the task of emancipating the whole people from the yoke of autocracy imposes upon us. At this point, we wish to state only that the *role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory.*

—V.I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* (1902)

WORKERS VANGUARD

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Sunday, December 6, 12 noon

The State

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Room 215

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The Revolution Betrayed and the Origins of the Left Opposition

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German Trotskyists in 1989 on Opening of Berlin Wall:

"Workers Soviets Must Rule in All Germany!"

This November the imperialist rulers celebrated the 20th anniversary of the opening up of the Berlin Wall in the former East Germany (DDR). The bourgeois rulers falsely portray this event and its aftermath as an expression of the longings of the East German masses for the supposed joys of capitalism and an unqualified rejection of socialism and communism. The reality was very different, as powerfully described in the statement by our comrades of the Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD—now the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands) that we print below. Republished from *Workers Vanguard* No. 490 (24 November 1989), this statement was issued days after the Berlin Wall came down on 9 November 1989 and over 200,000 copies were distributed.

The DDR was a bureaucratically deformed workers state that we Trotskyists defended against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. Capitalism had been overthrown in the DDR, as in much of East Europe, in the wake of the Soviet Red Army's defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II. But the DDR was ruled by a parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. On the basis of their dogma of "socialism in one country," the Stalinists opposed the extension of proletarian revolutions internationally while suppressing any independent political expression of the working class at home.

The late 1980s and early '90s saw the unraveling of Stalinist rule in East Europe and the Soviet Union. In the DDR, significant protest rallies began in October 1989, growing larger week by week. That month, hardline ruler Erich Honecker, head of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), was ousted from power. November 4 saw a million-strong demonstration in East Berlin. Contrary to today's capitalist mythology, it included many pro-socialist banners and slogans such as "For Communist Ideals! No Privileges!" The choices posed for the workers of the DDR were proletarian political revolution—i.e., the working class ousting the bureaucracy and taking political power into its own hands—or capitalist counterrevolution, i.e., the West German bourgeoisie taking over the DDR.

In struggling to effect a workers political revolution, part of the fight for the revolutionary reunification of Germany under the rule of the working class, the ICL undertook the largest and most sustained intervention in our history. In early December we began publishing the daily *Arprekorr*, Workers Press Correspondence. Groups of youth and workers in the DDR began to distribute *Arprekorr*, many of whom we organized into the Spartakist-Gruppen, or Spartacist groups.

The high point of struggle was the 3 January 1990 united-front demonstration against the fascist desecration of a Soviet war memorial and in defense of the DDR workers state that brought out some 250,000 people to East Berlin's Treptow Park. Our call for this protest was taken up by the ruling Stalinist party, which feared the growing impact of our political views. At Treptow, for the first time in 60 years, Trotskyists addressed a mass audience in a workers state. Participants and those listening on radio and TV heard two counterposed programs: that of the Stalinist SED, and that of the Trotskyist ICL. Over hostile Stalinist interjections, the TLD's Renate Dahlhaus declared, "Our economy is suffering from waste and obsolescence. The SED party dictatorship has shown that it is incompetent to fight this." We called for the forging of an egalitarian communist party and for the rule of workers and soldiers councils.

Spartakist photos

East Berlin, 3 January 1990: Spartakist speaker addresses ICL-initiated 250,000-strong rally in Treptow Park against fascist desecration of memorial to Red Army soldiers and in defense of DDR.

The Treptow mobilization posed the possibility of organized workers resistance to the imperialists' drive for capitalist annexation of the DDR. For that reason it became a key turning point, as Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev pulled the plug on the DDR, vastly speeding up the timetable for capitalist reunification, and the East German Stalinists began to organize a stampede into counterrevolution. In their counterrevolutionary blitzkrieg, the German bourgeoisie threw billions of deutschmarks into East Germany. Under the impact of the bourgeois offensive, the March 1990 Volkskammer (East German parliament) elections became a referendum on capitalist reunification. Demoralized and disorientated by the abject betrayals of the Stalinist bureaucracy, 85 percent of the population voted for either the Christian Democratic or Social Democratic coalitions. Counterrevolution had won, a bitter defeat not only for the East German working class but internationally.

The ICL alone fought to the end against capitalist counterrevolution in the DDR, the rest of East Europe and the Soviet Union. In contrast, the bulk of the left cheered it on, serving as junior partners in the imperialists' drive for capitalist restoration and standing openly with the forces of "democratic" counterrevolution. Many of the same groups today bemoan the poverty of East Europe while burying their own roles in helping to bring about this catastrophe.

We were very conscious that our intervention in the DDR was integral to the struggle for proletarian political revolution in the USSR as well. So, too, the defeat in the DDR paved the way for the ascendancy in 1991-92 of counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, homeland of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. An unparalleled defeat for working people all over the world, counterrevolution devastated the working classes of the former Soviet Union and the rest of East Europe, bringing grinding poverty, mass unemployment and fratricidal wars. Nor were the catastrophic results confined to the former Soviet bloc. On the ideological level, the consciousness of workers around the world has been thrown back, albeit unevenly, to the point where politically advanced workers no longer identify their struggles with the goals of socialism.

The collapse of bureaucratic rule and triumph of counterrevolution confirmed

continued on page 4

Young Spartacus

Police Assault UC Protesters

Drop All Charges Now!

NOVEMBER 30—More than 110 were arrested in demonstrations and building occupations at University of California campuses from November 18-20. Protesters rallied across the state in opposition to a massive 32 percent hike in tuition fees and a job- and wage-slashing offensive against campus workers by the UC Board of Regents. At UCLA 14 protesters were arrested for "unlawful assembly" inside the Regents meeting on November 18. The following day, AP photos showed a cop shooting a black student in the chest with a taser gun at a demonstration. Spartacus Youth Club members who participated in the protests also witnessed cops jabbing protesters with their batons.

A virtual army of cops was also mobilized to break up an occupation of the administration building at UC Davis by several hundred students on November 19. According to the *San Jose Mercury News*, "the California Highway Patrol arrived en masse, as did officers from Vacaville, Davis, Winters, Yolo County, Sacramento and more" (20 November). More than 50 protesters were arrested.

When some 40 protesters occupied the Wheeler Hall building at UC Berkeley on November 20, riot-equipped cops were brought in from the Alameda County Sheriff's Department and the Oakland and Berkeley police forces to back up the armed forces of the campus cops. Protesters outside Wheeler Hall who had mobilized in solidarity with the occupation were shoved and beaten with billy clubs, while cops pointed their weapons at demonstrators. Early on, three protesters were charged with felony burglary, and all of the student occupiers were arrested and charged with trespassing. A Berkeley biology professor, Robert Dudley, who had gone to monitor the situation, was thrown to the ground and then arrested for resisting and obstructing a police officer!

Daily Bruin

Protest against University of California austerity measures outside Board of Regents meeting, UCLA, November 18.

The police assaults and arrests of UC protesters provide an object lesson in the class nature of the Board of Regents and campus administration as the agents of the capitalist class on campus—enforcing austerity, busting campus unions and repressing student protest. Drop all the charges against the UC protesters now! For a class-struggle fight for free, quality, integrated education for all! Abolish the Board of Regents—for student/teacher/worker control of the universities! ■

Germany...

(continued from page 3)

Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky's warning that the political bankruptcy of Stalinism was a mortal danger to the historic gains of the working class. Following Marx, Trotsky emphasized that an isolated workers state could not survive in the long run since its level of economic productivity could not rise above that of the powerful advanced capitalist-imperialist states committed to its destruction. The preservation of proletarian power in the Soviet Union and East Europe required its international extension through worldwide socialist revolution.

As we wrote in the main document adopted at the ICL's Second International Conference in 1992, "For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!" (reprinted in *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 47-48 [Winter 1992-93]):

> "From the beginning we were in a political struggle with the abdicating Stalinist regime over the future of the DDR. While we were calling for a government of workers councils, the Stalinists were consciously acting to prevent a workers insurrection by demobilizing all army units that had formed soldiers councils as a result of our early propaganda. Although shaped by the disproportion of forces, there was in fact a contest between the ICL program of political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution....
>
> "*The workers of the world, and we among them, suffered a grave defeat with the victory of the Fourth Reich. But we fought.*"

* * *

Workers throughout the world seeking the rebirth of genuine communism are watching the dramatic events in East Germany. "Russia was the spark—Germany will be the flame," proclaimed a banner, a slogan from the KPD [German Communist Party] of the '20s, in the massive November 4 East Berlin demonstration. The developments in the DDR [German Democratic Republic] pose pointblank *proletorion politicol revolution*. This means ousting the Stalinist bureaucracy and erecting in its place *real workers soviets*, like those established in the October Revolution, based on collectivized property. This in turn can be the spark for socialist revolution in the capitalist West.

East Berliners flooded across the border into West Berlin on the night of November 9. Except for a handful all went back. Kohl tried to address a "victory rally" in West Berlin but was drowned out with boos and whistles. When he tried to strike up a chorus of "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles," Brandt, Momper & Co. sang along, but the boos and whistles drowned them out. And an attempted Nazi march on the Brandenburg Gate led by Republikaner *Führer* Schönhuber was turned back by crowds shouting "Nazis out!" East German workers are jubilant that the Wall is coming down, but they don't want a revanchist capitalist reunification.

One placard on November 4 read: "Hungary '56, China '89," and the spectre haunting the bureaucracy was the 17 June 1953 East German workers uprising, the first in East Europe against Stalinist bureaucratic rule. West German revanchists have tried to usurp June 17, and the East German bureaucracy spread the same lies about the uprising. But it belongs to the German working class. On that day East German workers appealed to their class brothers and sisters in the West to rise up against their capitalist masters. At the train station in Halle, workers greeted a train from the West with a banner proclaiming, "We're cleaning house in Pankow [East Berlin], now you sweep out the crap in Bonn." Ulbricht was saved only by Soviet tanks. In any case, what was required then as well as today is fraternization with the Red Army. As Siberian and Silesian miners strike against the ravages of "market reforms," the East German workers can make common cause with their class comrades and be the springboard for proletarian political revolution throughout East Europe and the Soviet Union.

Spartakist

Spartacists raise banner "For a Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist Europe" at demonstration in honor of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, East Berlin, 14 January 1990. Spartakist Workers Party poster for March 1990 elections declares, "No to Capitalist Reunification!"

The Red Army crushed the Nazi regime and established a bureaucratically deformed workers state east of the Elbe. But the resurgence of German nationalism and fascist terror has not been restricted to the West German successor state of the Third Reich. There, the first victims of fascist terror are immigrant workers. And now similar attacks, for example on Vietnamese workers, are taking place in East Germany. Hostility to immigrant workers such as the Poles has been expressed even in the mass protest demonstrations, as in Dresden. Instead, as a banner on November 4 declared, "For Communist Ideals! No Privileges!" This means: ***Full citizenship rights for immigrant workers East and West!***

Today a wing of the East German security forces shows its support for revanchist capitalist restoration under the watchword of German nationalism by cloning a new generation of fascist terrorist skinheads and scum, the existence of which the bureaucracy has done its best to deny. A banner of an anti-fascist contingent at the November 4 demonstration read, "Weimar: 160 Nazi Skinheads Organized a Manhunt." Even the perimeter of this massive demonstration was infested with fascists from West and East. Just as Russian workers must smash Pamyat, workers/minorities in East and West Germany had better organize to crush these vermin *now!*

A demonstration of 50,000 SED [Socialist Unity Party] members in East Berlin on November 10 demanded "No sellout of the DDR," for "real plans," and "return to Lenin." Stalin gave central planning a bad name. The East German economy is the most successful in Eastern Europe. Workers may chant "Gorby, Gorby, help us." But by and large they reject Gorbachev's "perestroika" and "market socialism," which have bred increasing misery and national conflict from the Balkans to the Baltic and Caucasus. East German workers are not about to surrender the social gains they have won. Attempts to form a Solidarność-style anti-Communist "free union" have fizzled.

Workers in the DDR have followed attentively the strikes against perestroika of Soviet miners. The factory committees the miners have organized are the *core of real workers soviets*, which are *the key* if economic planning is to be controlled by the working class. Although tremendous ferment exists in the plants, the working class remains politically atomized, e.g., there have as yet been no strikes, which would immediately be *politicol*. Workers councils must be established at the point of production with control over quantity and quality. Computerized input-output analysis (developed by Russian-born economist Leontief) can permit investments in line with the democratically controlled growth of investment and consumption.

When the Wall started coming down on Friday [November 9], the West German stock market went up, because Frankfurt bankers and their SPD [social-democratic] front men are dreaming of bleeding East Germany dry the way they have Poland and Hungary. To defend collectivized property and to attack the world market, East Germany needs a stable, readily convertible currency (e.g., based on the gold standard like the Soviet *chervonets* in 1923). However, an isolated revolutionary East German workers state would still be threatened by the power of cheap commodities, as Marx warned.

There can be no genuine socialism in half a country facing an economically far more powerful imperialist neighbor. From the podium of the massive November 4 demonstration writer Stefan Heym was enthusiastically received when he said, "Socialism, not Stalinist but the real thing, which we want to finally build, for our benefit and that of all Germany, is unthinkable without democracy." The defense of collectivized property in East Germany requires its extension to the West. That means the expropriation of the Frankfurt bankers by proletarian revolution in the West—to which immigrant workers are key. We Trotskyists call for the *revolutionary reunification of Germany* through socialist revolution in the West and proletarian political revolution in the East. Because of the strategic weight of Germany in Europe, reunification, if it is not to recreate an imperialist behemoth, a Fourth Reich, can only be as part of a *Sociolist United Stotes of Europe*.

The huge protest demonstrations, impressive in their discipline, remain dominated by petty-bourgeois forces like Neues Forum and the Social Democrats (SDP). On November 4, Neues Forum called for "free elections" supervised by the UN, i.e., by imperialism, while the SDP, just like Helmut Kohl, called for a return to a "market economy." When the [West German] SPD and their hangers-on talk about "democratic socialism" they mean "democratic" counterrevolution, of which the SPD intends to be the general staff. While Kohl was booed down, Brandt and Momper were cheered. The Social Democrats are the main danger for East German workers.

The International Communist League and its German section, the Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands, uphold the Trotskyist position of unconditional defense of the social gains of the October Revolution and its extension from East Berlin to Havana against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. In contrast, the social democrats faking as Trotskyists such as Ernest Mandel and the Bund Sozialistischer Arbeiter [followers of the dubious David North] surrender these gains at every point they are challenged. They backed Solidarność' counterrevolutionary bid in 1981 and opposed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan against imperialist-backed clerical reaction in 1979.

To date no left opposition has surfaced within the SED. Yet there have been expressions of support for real communism in the DDR, such as the signs on November 4 calling "for a new communist party." As in 1953, what is lacking today is a proletarian internationalist vanguard party fighting for power. Forging such a party requires returning to the Bolshevism of Lenin and Trotsky! Hail Rosa Luxemburg, the greatest founder of German Communism, murdered by the Freikorps at the behest of the SPD leadership! The German Revolution, East and West, needs a Leninist-Trotskyist workers party!■

Polanski...

(continued from page 2)

desires and they act on them—desires that sometimes involve significantly older people. There is nothing inherently wrong with this. For us the guiding principle for sexual relations is that of *effective consent*, meaning mutual agreement and understanding, as opposed to coercion. It is especially ridiculous to present the sexually experienced, post-pubescent teenager in the Polanski case as an unwitting child. To lump together sex with a minor or morning-after regrets with rape is to trivialize and belittle the savage brutality of the crime of rape.

Sex with men is not the source of women's oppression, contrary to feminist writ. The bourgeois family, that straitjacket of sexual monogamy for women, is. Bourgeois feminists have done much damage to the cause of women's liberation by fueling the arguments of the capitalist sex police. Criminalizing sexual activity for young people has always been a war cry of the fire-and-brimstone religious types and other right-wing forces. When feminists took up the cause of repression by arguing that pornography was "violence against women," they helped make renewed anti-sex Puritanism more mainstream. Meanwhile, the "date rape" furor pushed by feminists on campus has reinforced the Victorian sexual dual standard that while men are naturally lecherous, of course "decent" women actually do not like sex. The assault by "family values" feminists on men as sexual predators has also fed into the government's relentless hounding of convicted "sex offenders" beyond their prison sentences. This has driven many out of their homes, even into tent cities, where they are driven further into the wilderness if found out. Many of these individuals are guilty of *nothing*, just consensual acts with youth, that is, "minors" without any civil rights, who are themselves trapped under the oppressive control of parents or the state.

As apostles of such Puritanism, the feminists are joined by pseudo-socialists like Workers World Party (WWP). In "Polanski, Rape & Justice," (*Workers World* online, 8 October), WWP accepts the prosecution's story without a blink, declaring: "It is clear from the grand jury testimony" that "Polanski drugged and raped" Geimer. In a chilling call for Polanski's head, with a hint of bizarre and sick vigilantism, WWP adds: "Why aren't celebrities circulating a petition supporting Geimer and all survivors of sexual abuse and condemning Polanski and his defenders? In fact, why not call for a women's tribunal—made up of survivors of sexual assault—to decide his fate?"

Our defense of Roman Polanski, like our longstanding defense of NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association) and others persecuted for not conforming to the norms of bourgeois society, is based on our Marxist program for women's liberation through socialist revolution. It is also based on our understanding that this state upholds in every way it can the inherently oppressive bourgeois family, including enforcing sexual repression and fear. This repression includes a host of vindictive and peculiar state laws which reveal more about the sadistic and repressed character of capitalist society than anything else, as does this seemingly endless persecution of Roman Polanski. Hands off Polanski! Drop the charges!■

Protest Gag Order Against Ray Luc Levasseur

Nancy Lane

Last month, former Ohio 7 political prisoner Ray Luc Levasseur was vindictively barred from speaking at an event at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, about the notorious 1989 sedition frame-up trial in which he was a defendant. The university library's invitation to Levasseur was met with a vile slander campaign by the cops and bourgeois press, which tarred Levasseur as "bloodthirsty" and a "terrorist," while the state senate passed a resolution "roundly condemning" that this opponent of U.S. imperialist terror had been invited to speak.

Bowing to pressure from Massachusetts Democratic governor Deval Patrick and the state Fraternal Order of Police, the university administration canceled Levasseur's invitation. In response, the Social Thought and Political Economy Program and several academic departments took over sponsorship of the event and reinvited Levasseur. UMass president Jack Wilson admitted he had "no way of preventing a speaking appearance, based on free speech and free assembly rights" (*Boston Herald*, 11 November). But Levasseur's parole officer did, denying him permission to leave Maine. Arnie Larson, president of the Massachusetts Fraternal Order of Police, boasted, "We reached out to people in the Justice Department and educated them about our passion here...and they followed through on it" (*Boston Globe*, 12 November).

When former political prisoner and sedition trial co-defendant Pat Levasseur (Ray's former wife) spoke in Ray Luc Levasseur's place, she was met by an ominous display of police bonapartism. An army of over 200 cops from New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts protested the event on the campus with signs reading, "There Is No Such Thing as a Former Terrorist." This was an echo of the government's 1987 frame-up of two other Ohio 7 defendants for the killing of a New Jersey state trooper.

Pat and Ray Luc Levasseur were part of the Ohio 7, convicted for their roles in a radical group that took credit for bank "expropriations" and bombings against symbols of U.S. imperialism such as military and corporate offices. Before their arrests in the mid 1980s, the Ohio 7 were targets of massive manhunts and their children were kidnapped at gunpoint by the Feds and interrogated. Having already convicted and sentenced them to decades behind bars, in 1989 the Justice Department spent nearly $10 million to vindictively prosecute them again for the same alleged crimes, as part of an effort to rehabilitate discredited "thought crime" sedition laws. Pat and Ray Luc Levasseur as well as another member of the Ohio 7, Richard Williams, were dragged through a ten-month trial for conspiring to overthrow the U.S. government. The defendants were acquitted, though this did not put an end to the government vendetta. Richard Williams died in prison in December 2005 due to medical neglect and abuse during his solitary confinement. Two other members of the Ohio 7, Tom Manning and Jaan Laaman, still languish behind bars. Free Manning and Laaman now!

From the standpoint of the working class, the actions of the Ohio 7 against U.S. imperialism and racist injustice are not crimes, and these courageous activists should not have served a day in prison. Although we do not share their political perspective, we have been outspoken in the defense of the Ohio 7, several of whom have been longtime recipients of the Partisan Defense Committee's monthly stipend program for class-war prisoners. We noted in "RICO Witchhunt Targets Ohio 7" (*WV* No. 476, 28 April 1989), "with the seditious conspiracy case of the Ohio 7 this dangerous government is trying to move a big step closer to its police-state dreams of outlawing leftist political views." Likewise, the censorship of Ray Luc Levasseur and the massive cop mobilization at UMass are intended as a threat to all who would speak out against the ravages of the racist American ruling class. ***An injury to one is an injury to all!*** ■

Stewart...

(continued from page 1)

organization associated with the Spartacist League—stated that Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar "should not have spent a single day in jail! Their frame-up prosecution gives the government a green light to prosecute lawyers for the alleged crimes of their clients, ripping the Sixth Amendment right to counsel to shreds." Pointing out that the jailing came in the immediate aftermath of the Justice Department's announcement of plans for a show-trial prosecution of Guantánamo detainees, to be held within a mile of the World Trade Center site, the letter stressed that "the message is clear: any determined defense of those the government deems an enemy can mean a prison sentence for 'material support' to terrorism."

The Second Circuit's 125-page decision against Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar made no bones about its effect on restricting the right to legal counsel, declaring that it was now "less likely that other incarcerated persons will have the same level of access to counsel that [Stewart's] client was given." The court ordered not only that bail be revoked immediately but that a new hearing be held by the trial judge, John G. Koeltl, to *increase* the sentences of all three defendants. In 2006, Federal prosecutors who had demanded a 30-year sentence reacted in outrage when Koeltl, citing Stewart's efforts on behalf of "the poor, the disadvantaged and the unpopular," set her sentence at 28 months. Yousry got 20 months while Abdel Sattar, a former postal worker, was given *24 years*.

The higher court, which includes two Clinton appointees, outrageously denounced Koeltl for failing to consider whether Stewart committed perjury at trial by maintaining that she believed she did nothing illegal. Describing her sentence as "breathtakingly low," one of the appellate judges all but explicitly called for Stewart, who suffers from breast cancer, to be locked away for life. The *New York Post* (17 November) cheered, "Finally: Jihadist-Enabling Lawyer Lynne Stewart Ordered to Jail," while the New York *Daily News* (19 November) headlined: "Terror Moll Gets Hers."

Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar were convicted after a seven-month trial fraught with prosecutorial misconduct. Prosecutors pandered to public fear in the post-September 11 climate, even introducing videotapes of Osama bin Laden as evidence! The evidence against Yousry, a doctoral candidate in Middle Eastern Studies at New York University and an opponent of Islamic fundamentalism, consisted of notebooks of his discussions with Sheik Abdel Rahman for use in his dissertation. Yousry now faces possibly two decades in prison for ***doing his job*** as an interpreter. Ahmed Abdel Sattar is an Islamic fundamentalist whose only "crime" was to rack up large phone bills talking to other fundamentalists. At bottom, they were convicted of being Arab in post-September 11 America.

Though the prosecution was carried out under the Republican Bush administration, this mugging of constitutional rights has the fingerprints of the Democratic Clinton White House all over it. The Special Administrative Measures Stewart purportedly violated were enacted by the Clinton administration. For years, the Feds under Clinton secretly recorded the supposedly privileged attorney-client discussions between Stewart, her aides and Abdel Rahman. Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar were indicted under the 1996 Anti-terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, one of several measures that have been escalated under the "war on terror" to attack fundamental rights.

After eight years of chanting "Anybody but Bush," the liberals and reformist left hailed the election of Barack Obama and his promises of "change," not least in regard to the "war on terror." But as we have always stressed, the "war on terror" has the stamp of both parties of U.S. imperialism. Despite Obama's campaign pledge to close Guantánamo and end torture, his administration has endorsed indefinite detention, a hallmark of police-state dictatorships and a centerpiece of Bush's war on democratic rights. Many Guantánamo detainees will be transferred to detention centers in Bagram, Afghanistan, which has become synonymous with torture and all-around imperialist savagery, and elsewhere. And as the death toll of Afghans mounts ever higher in the U.S./NATO occupation of that country, the announced show trial of Guantánamo prisoners like Khalid Shaikh Mohammed demonstrates the Obama administration's commitment to continuing the assault on democratic rights at home.

At the onset of the prosecution of Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar, we pointed to the urgent need for leftists, trade unionists and defenders of democratic rights to defend them against a government intent on tearing up the rights of all of us. SL and PDC supporters have repeatedly turned out to express our support at court hearings and protests, and in recent years Stewart has been a regular invited speaker at the PDC's Holiday Appeal benefits for class-war prisoners. Based on the principle of non-sectarian, class-struggle defense, we have also stressed that defense of Stewart is inseparable from that of Yousry and Abdel Sattar. Not so the reformist left, which disappeared any mention of Yousry and Abdel Sattar long ago. Recent articles protesting Stewart's incarceration in *Workers World*, the International Socialist Organization's *Socialist Worker* and the Revolutionary Communist Party's *Revolution* don't even mention their names.

Stewart and Yousry's jailing reveals yet again the workings of the courts as an integral part of the repressive machinery of the "democratic" capitalist state, which masks the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with a veneer of equality before the law. But there can be no equality between the exploited and their exploiters, between the oppressed and their oppressors. We fight to win those outraged at the legal persecution of Stewart, Yousry and Abdel Sattar to a perspective of proletarian revolution to abolish the capitalist system, sweeping away the capitalist state and establishing a workers state, where those who labor rule. Then, and only then, will we see justice for all the victims of imperialist barbarism, at home and abroad. ■

Twenty-Fourth Annual

Holiday Appeal for Class-War Prisoners

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!
Abolish the Racist Death Penalty!
Free All Class-War Prisoners!

Jennifer Beech

Bay Area
Sunday, December 6
3 to 7 p.m.
The Women's Building
3543 18th St. (near Valencia)
San Francisco
(Near 16th St./Mission BART)
For more information:
(510) 839-0852

Los Angeles
Sunday, December 13
2 to 5 p.m.
F Square Printing
519 S. Spring Street
(Between W 5th and W 6th St., 2 blocks east of Pershing Metro Station)
For more information:
(213) 380-8897

New York City
Saturday, December 5
5 to 9 p.m.
District Council 1707 Hall
75 Varick Street,14th Fl.
Manhattan
(North of Canal St., take 1, A, C or E train to Canal St.)
For more information:
(212) 406-4252

Chicago
Sunday, December 13
4 to 8 p.m.
U.E. Hall
37 S. Ashland
(at Monroe)
For more information:
(312) 563-0442

Toronto
Friday, December 11
7 to 10 p.m.
Steelworkers Hall
25 Cecil Street
(1 block south of College at Ross Street, west of Queen's Park Station)
For more information:
(416) 593-4138

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Thirteenth National Conference of the SL/U.S.

"Dog Days of the Post-Soviet Period"

The Spartacist League, U.S. section of the International Communist League, held its 13th National Conference in New York last summer. The National Conference is the highest body of the SL, charged with reviewing the work of the organization in the period since our last conference, thrashing out questions in dispute and electing a Central Committee, which oversees the party's work between conferences. The gathering was preceded by a period of intense pre-conference discussion, formally opened with the issuance of a Conference Call by the outgoing Central Committee three months before the conference and leading to the election of delegates at local membership meetings on the basis of a political platform.

The document adopted at the conference noted that this gathering took place "in the midst of a worldwide economic crisis, the most substantial since the Great Depression, and in the aftermath of the election of a Democratic president following eight years of the despised and somewhat demented Bush administration." The document pointed out that Barack Obama is a "Wall Street Democrat whose economic advisers, Summers and Geithner, are direct representatives of banks and financial interests. They aim to make the working class and oppressed pay in order to restore the profits of the American bourgeoisie while preserving and extending U.S. overlordship abroad."

The conference had to grapple with a number of our opportunist lunges in the preceding period. Placing these problems in their historical context in the post-Soviet world, the main resolution passed by the conference cited the following statement by one senior comrade: "In the aftermath of the fall of the USSR, it's very difficult to maintain our revolutionary continuity and very easy to have it be destroyed." The document added:

> "The period that the SL/U.S. has confronted in the last decades is characterized by a dearth of class struggle and the proletariat's defeat with the counterrevolution in the USSR, which has resulted in a throwback in consciousness where communism is considered utopian at best. The party's internal struggles have reflected the impact of this reactionary period on us.... A failure to recognize the most fundamental difference between us and the rest of the left—that they do not share the same ultimate goal, world communism—has been an underlying factor in the recurrent tendencies of successive regimes toward phony mass work and unrealistic expectations of recruitment or regroupment."

In 2007, the ICL's Fifth International Conference codified corrections to some manifestations of these tendencies within the ICL (see "Maintaining a Revolutionary Program in the Post-Soviet Period," *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 60, Autumn 2007). This year's SL/U.S. National Conference had to deal with a growing political adaptation to the liberals, reformists and black nationalists claiming to fight in defense of black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

From the time the SL and Partisan Defense Committee—a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization associated with the SL—first took up Mumia's case in 1987, we have fought, often virtually alone on the left, to expose the racist frame-up of this innocent man as widely as possible within the international labor movement and among all opponents of racist, capitalist injustice. Mumia's threatened execution in the summer of 1995 provoked an outpouring of protest internationally, leading to a stay of execution while also drawing in an array of liberal and reformist forces that had previously been uninterested in his case. While we had worked to get larger forces on board, we also recognized that the involvement of these forces, virulently hostile to our proletarian and revolutionary purpose, would necessarily mean a diminished role for us. However, in the past few years, this understanding was increasingly subverted, as we committed ourselves to being the best builders of a campaign to "revitalize" the (nonexistent) "mass movement" to free Mumia.

WV Photo

January 1992 Spartacist protest outside Federal Reserve Bank in New York City, where Boris Yeltsin was feted by his Wall Street paymasters. ICL uniquely fought to mobilize Soviet workers against capitalist counterrevolution.

The political liquidationism inherent in this false perspective became particularly acute when it intersected the first serious presidential candidacy by a black man in this deeply racist society. Not surprisingly, after years of bleating "anybody but Bush" our opponents on the left, including the dominant liberal/reformist elements in the Mumia defense milieu, wholeheartedly embraced Barack Obama. Alarmingly, this sentiment found an echo at a meeting in our New York center attended by members of the resident bodies, the SL Political Bureau and the International Secretariat, following Obama's vaunted "More Perfect Union" speech in March 2008. Notwithstanding an attempted corrective by leading comrades outside the party center stressing the centrality of our class opposition to this black bourgeois politician, Obama's speech was applauded as a "turning point" for "acknowledging race and racial oppression in the U.S."

In fact, Obama had lauded the original slaveholders' Constitution and disavowed his erstwhile mentor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, for simply asserting that racial oppression remained a central factor in American society. Had we gone to press with the main political line advanced at that meeting, it would have been a public betrayal of our principle of proletarian class independence, a lurch toward the Democratic Party of racist American imperialism. Following reconsideration by comrades in the center, our press rightly characterized Obama's message as "'National Unity' in Service of U.S. Imperialism" (*WV* No. 911, 28 March 2008).

As the party sought to come to grips with the roots of this opportunist departure, resistance from a small section of the leadership developed into a full-fledged factional opposition in the period before the conference. While repeatedly stating their agreement that the resident leadership had taken the party to the brink of liquidation, this minority continued to cling to the politics and methods that had paved the way to such liquidationism. The minority submitted a platform counterposed to the majority document, and delegates were elected on the basis of one or the other of these two factional documents, in proportion to their support in the party membership. Other groupings and individuals also presented documents on disputed questions before the conference. After a full debate in the pre-conference period and at the conference itself, delegates voted overwhelmingly in favor of the majority document, "Fighting for Programmatic Continuity in the Dog Days of the Post-Soviet Period." At the end of the conference, the majority and minority caucuses formally dissolved, though the minority did not change its views.

Members of the ICL's International Executive Committee participated in the conference deliberations as fraternal delegates with voice and consultative vote. The greetings from the Italian section, the Lega Trotskista, were especially appreciated for their incisive summary of the situation facing us:

> "This Conference takes place at the intersection of the deepest economic crisis in the last 70 years, which is hitting the working class and downtrodden masses worldwide and will shape the political landscape; and the election of black Democrat Barack Obama, a gift to U.S. imperialism and the capitalist classes abroad, raising renewed illusions in the capitalist system amongst workers and minorities. In this context, the ICL and the SL/U.S. faced a political crisis marked by a series of capitulations to the Democratic Party and its liberal and reformist tails, centered on a practice of increasingly turning the party into a civil defense organization for black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal and a pressure group on the Democratic Party. Underlying these failures was an idealist subjectivist methodology that 'yes, we can' break out of political isolation, by entering a permanent campaign mode and finding 'convergence' with other forces at the expense of our communist program. The fact that the party regime pushing this methodology found wide support speaks to our current political isolation and the willingness to follow a leadership which proposes an apparent easy breakthrough and has the strength to pursue it."

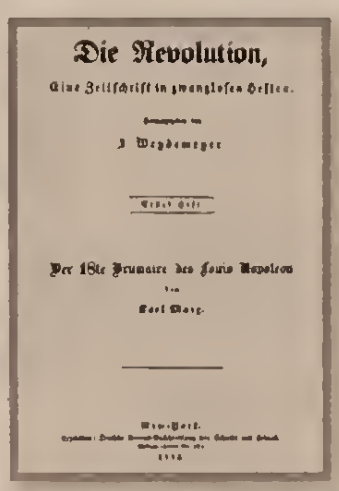
At the same time, the Italian greetings noted:

> "The last four years have seen major political correctives and advances...[including] the historic correction of our position on executive office, which has vindicated and completed the fights of our predecessors from Marx and Engels to Lenin and Luxemburg against reformism [see 'Down With Executive Offices of the Capitalist State!—Marxist Principles and Electoral Tactics,' *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 61, Spring 2009]. That we were able to carry on a task left to us by such revolutionary giants speaks to the strength of our party, which will remain in the future."

Pressures of the Period

Founding American Trotskyist and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) leader James P. Cannon wrote that factional struggle is always a reflection of the class struggle, and so it was with this fight. The imme-

Beard


Die Revolution,
Eine Zeitschrift in zwanglosen Heften.
J. Weydemeyer
Der 18te Brumaire des Louis Napoleon
Karl Marx.

Karl Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852): "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please ...but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past."

diate pressures on us have been the election of a black Democrat as president against the backdrop of the financial crisis. Notwithstanding that Obama is a Wall Street Democrat who, moreover, made escalation of the U.S.-led war and occupation of Afghanistan a centerpiece of his campaign, his election generated renewed illusions among the working class in liberal reformism, including the notion that government intervention in the economy can better the conditions of the working people. The current bureaucratic, pro-Democratic Party misleadership of the trade unions has mostly been prostrate before and in some cases complicit in a range of attacks by the capitalists accomplished under successive Democratic and Republican administrations, from the rollback of gains of preceding workers struggles, to the increasingly restricted access to higher education, to attacks on the remaining gains of the civil rights movement.

While there seems to be some increased interest in Marxism now that the anarchy and instability of the capitalist system have again been exposed by the financial crisis, the bottom line is that workers and the oppressed have been taking it for a long time because they do not see any alternative. Following the final destruction of the USSR in 1991-92, even more politically advanced workers generally accept that the historic struggle for a socialist society proved to be at best a failed experiment. The reformist left has been increasingly abandoning even lip service to the liberating ideals of communism and revolution.

Emblematic of this is the French Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR), once the exemplar of the radicalization of the New Left generation. In the 1960s-early 1970s when the Vietnamese liberation forces were giving the American imperialists a black eye, the LCR spurned the proletariat in favor of petty-bourgeois radicalism and guerrillaism, seeking to be associated with the Vietnamese Stalinists as well as others who, at that time, militantly resisted imperialism and capitalist oppression. Albeit with opportunist politics, Alain Krivine and his fellows fought the cops on the barricades of May '68 in Paris. Today they exult in the "death of communism" and are in the business of being the "left wing" of the Cold Warrior social democracy, which considers Stalin's Russia to have been no better than Hitler's genocidal fascism. The LCR put the final touches on a long process of reconciling itself to its own bourgeois rulers when it dissolved into its newly founded "New Anti-Capitalist Party," thus excising both "revolutionary" and "communist" from its self-description (see "'Death of Communism' Leftists in New Guise," *WV* No. 934, 10 April). The very term "anti-capitalist" was carefully chosen to avoid any hint of identification with the Bolshevik-led October Revolution of 1917 and to be ambiguous on whether or not one is for socialism.

In the U.S., which has never had even a mass social-democratic party, the reformists openly embrace the Democrats and/or their Green Party shills. Typically, the International Socialist Organization celebrated the election of a black Democrat as the new Commander-in-Chief of U.S. imperialism because "Obama's victory convinced large numbers of people...that something different is possible" (*Socialist Worker*, 21 January).

Many of these organizations, having lined up behind imperialist-backed anti-Soviet forces from Jimmy Carter's "human rights" crusade to Polish Solidarność and the Afghan *mujahedin*, bear a share of the responsibility for the catastrophic defeat for the world proletariat represented by the capitalist counterrevolutions in the former Soviet Union and East Europe. Decades of Stalinist lies and bureaucratism had so eroded the socialist consciousness of the Soviet proletariat that it failed to rally in defense of the historic gains embodied in the workers state. We are proud that we swam "against the stream" and remained at our posts in defense of the gains of the October Revolution. Meanwhile many organizations falsely claiming to be Trotskyist lent their support to "democratic" counterrevolution in the train of their own bourgeoisies, which were determined to finally roll back the gains of the October Revolution. As we wrote in the "Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program" adopted by the ICL's Third International Conference in 1998:

> "The 'Russian question' has been the defining political question of the 20th century and the touchstone for revolutionaries. We Trotskyists stayed at our posts and fought to preserve and extend the revolutionary gains of the working class while every other tendency on the planet capitulated to the ideological pressure of imperialist anti-communism. Above all our defense of the USSR was expressed in our fight for new October Revolutions around the world."
>
> —*Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 54, Spring 1998

Today, as part of our continuing struggle for world socialist revolution, we uphold the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the remaining deformed workers states (China, Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea) while fighting for proletarian political revolution against the sellout Stalinist bureaucracies. But the disproportion is very great between our revolutionary purpose and the current political consciousness of the working class internationally.

Liquidationism and Subjective Idealism

Rejecting the idealist notion underlying party work in the recent period that objective limitations can be overcome through sufficient force of will, the National Conference upheld the position that "the basic problems we face are *objective* and therefore cannot be resolved simply through internal political struggle." We also reject *bourgeois objectivism*, embraced by classical Social Democracy, which at bottom denies the possibility of transforming society through a revolutionary struggle led by a proletarian vanguard. As Trotsky pointed out in *Lessons of October* (1924), if the Bolsheviks had failed to take power in October 1917 there would be no lack of social-democratic academics and "Marxists" who would have come forward to "prove" the objective impossibility of that revolution ever taking place. The main conference resolution stressed:

> "Bringing revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat is not supra-historical. Our ability to impact the world, to significantly recruit or to achieve an organizational breakthrough is not the result of subjective effort or force of will alone. Workers and youth will be won to our program in the course of a process of politicization conditioned by class relations and class struggle—an objective historical process outside of the sphere of our small party's influence or comrades' wills. As Marx noted: 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past' (Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*)."

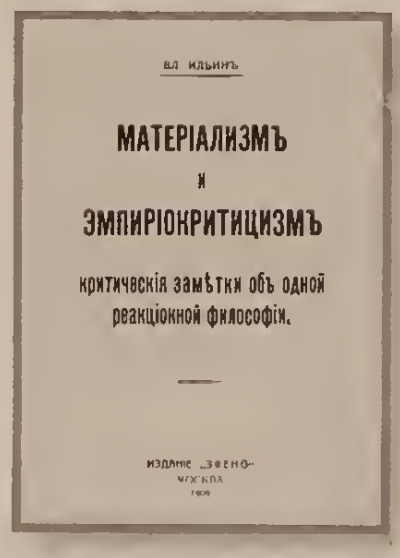
Lenin fought against subjective idealism and a rise of religiosity ("god-loving") in the ranks of the then-Bolshevik faction after the defeat of the 1905 Revolution in Russia. His most famous polemic against this is *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908). But unlike the Bolsheviks, experienced and steeled in the course of several very different kinds of struggles—offensive and defensive—wars, defeats and revolutions between 1905 and 1917, we are in a particularly long and deep trough. As our founding national chairman, James Robertson, noted in a talk at the Fourth ICL Conference in 2003 on the revolutionary antecedents of the Spartacist tendency: "It is an unfortunate fact of life that individual life spans do not necessarily correspond to the rhythms of political developments." Impatience and impressionism are characteristics that contribute to opportunism.

The pressures of the period have helped to generate attempts to find a way to "get rich quick," i.e., liquidating our revolutionary, internationalist and proletarian program in order to latch on to larger forces, hostile to the working class and to our revolutionary purpose. There were several early expressions of liquidationist pressures on the party. In our Canadian section in 1994, a small faction was formed by Y. Rad and Marie Hayes, who glorified various nationalist, ex-Stalinist formations in post-Soviet Russia and wanted to support the bourgeois African National Congress in South Africa. In the case of the tendency led by Jan Norden, which defected from the SL in 1996 to become the Internationalist Group, we characterized them as "Pabloites of the second mobilization." Norden and his cohorts retrospectively denigrated our intervention into the DDR (East Germany) in 1989-90, as they pursued some of the Stalinist has-beens of the former ruling party (SED-PDS) that had helped sell the DDR out. In exchange for this illusion of an opportunity, Norden wanted to disavow Trotsky's fight for revolutionary leadership against Stalinism and popular-frontism (see the publicly available ICL *International Bulletin* No. 38, "Norden's 'Group': Shamefaced Defectors from Trotskyism," June 1996). He and his co-factionalists also conciliated a group of Brazilian trade unionists who took another faction of the union bureaucracy to court. At our 2003 ICL conference, we fought against yet another series of opportunist lunges (see *Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 58, Spring 2004).

If we had not fought back against these explicit challenges to our program and defeated them inside our party, the ICL would not be here today as, however small, the programmatic continuity of revolutionary Marxism. Nonetheless, it is profoundly idealist to behave as though a correct fight, correctly assimilated, will protect the cadres against being sucked off base by new pressures...or by the same pressures expressed again in periods such as this one.

Y.A. Zhelyabuzhsky

Lenin playing chess with Bogdanov (right) in Capri, 1908. Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, published in 1909, polemicized against subjective idealism of Bogdanov and other Bolsheviks.



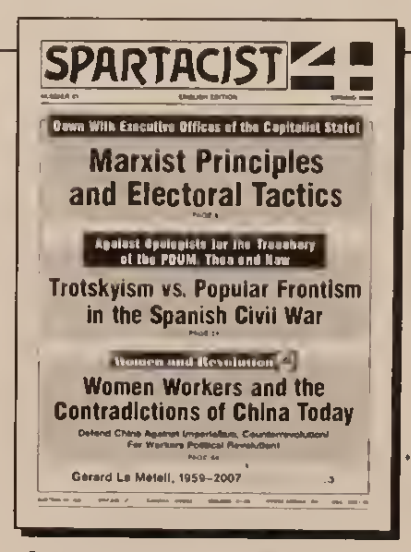
Problems in the Mumia Campaign

While some of the political work of the 2004 SL/U.S. conference was correct and necessary, particularly codifying a sharp fight to reassert our crucial revolutionary continuity as against appetites to accommodate in the direction of some of our most despicable political enemies on the left, a wrong emphasis was put on episodes of sectarianism in our work as the main problem. At the recent conference, the party minority hotly contested the majority's conclusion that the 2004 "conference document contained the roots of problems that subsequently found full flower" and gave "a political justification for opportunism and disdain for theory and program by urging 'intervention' and 'tactics' in the direction of liberal activism."

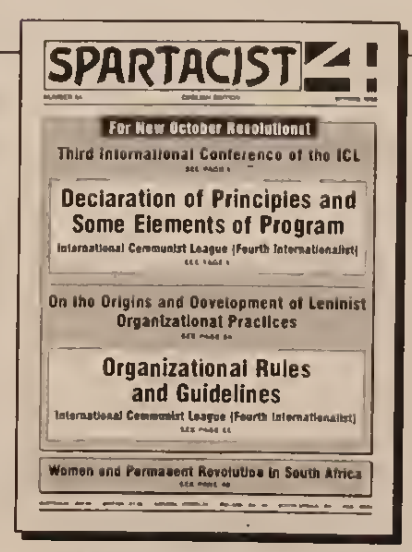
The stress on "anti-sectarian" tactical militancy led to a series of opportunist lunges. There was also a systematic skew toward vowing to get around our problems through our own efforts, which meant especially substituting exhortation for reason and micromanaging party branches from the center for political guidance. The concomitant to this was the disparaging of the party's theoretical, material and human resources, not least our precious, and aging, senior cadre.

That we endorsed that document at the 2004 conference speaks at bottom to the difficulty in getting oriented in the

continued on page 8



Spartacist (English edition) No. 61
Spring 2009, $1.50 (64 pages)



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Conference...

(continued from page 7)

post-Soviet period. As part of our determination to reverse course, the 2009 conference resolved: "The main weapon we have to guard against opportunist zigzags and lurches under our current adverse historical circumstances is to struggle to understand our place in history. This renders all the more important *Spartacist* as the ICL's theoretical organ and the Prometheus Research Library, which contains holdings of our party and of the workers movement that are truly priceless in political terms."

A main task of the conference was to arrest the programmatic bending expressed in the course of vainly substituting the small forces of ourselves and our sympathizers for the absence of a mass movement to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, thereby letting our opponents off the hook as we pursued "united fronts." We were increasingly trying to create a "movement" for Mumia through our own subjective efforts, despite the lack of objective basis for such a movement. This meant that the party was increasingly liquidating politically and organizationally into a movement that barely existed.

For example, *after* two SL supporters representing the PDC were physically excluded from an event by the New York Free Mumia Coalition, the PDC wrote an "Open Letter to Fighters for Mumia's Freedom" (*WV* No. 912, 11 April 2008) appealing to these political opponents for a "united front." While naturally making many good points against them, the "Open Letter" failed to even mention the question of the Democratic Party (and their shills, the Greens), which was in fact the real concern of these pseudo-leftists. In effect, we were reaching out for a bloc with those who are deadly enemies of principled class-struggle defense. Another example of adaptation, which did not make it into the public arena, was expressed in initial resistance in New York to the need for the SL to carry a banner in the PDC/Labor Black League contingent at a Mumia rally in Philadelphia—held on the eve of the state's Democratic primary election—making clear our opposition to the Democratic Party.

Our articles on Mumia in recent years have emphasized the need to "revitalize" or "rebuild" a mass movement that had been "demobilized" by the reformists with their appeals for a "new trial." Relatedly, *WV* coverage of the united-front protests initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee in the spring of 2008 tended to describe these as "exemplary actions that pointed to what is necessary to win Mumia's freedom: the mass mobilization of the working class independent of and in opposition to its capitalist class enemy" (*WV* No. 927, 2 January). This vastly inflates the importance of these modest demonstrations, which, moreover, were carried out in the political framework of an opportunist orientation.

At the conference there was debate and clarification over the role and purpose of the united front in general. Prior to the conference, some comrades, including a subsequent member of the minority, had argued that the united front is in and of itself a counterposition to the pro-capitalist politics of our opponents. While the minority did not continue to defend that precise statement, they did continue to fetishize the united front—particularly brandishing it as a solution to our purported "withdrawal from opponents combat" in defense work in the 1990s—and the question of the united front remained at the center of the debate during the conference. The united front is ***nothing more*** than a means, a *tactic*, with the aim of embedding the revolutionary program in the masses. In 1973, we wrote, "Any form of fetishism toward the mere form of united fronts...means abdicating as revolutionists because at bottom it is the dissolution of the vanguard party into the class through the substitution of such forms (and other politics!) for the role of the revolutionary party" ("Letter to the OCRFI and the OCI," *Spartacist* No. 22, Winter 1973-74).

An educational presentation at the conference by comrade Joseph Seymour was valuable in reasserting the purpose of the united-front tactic and the conditions for its implementation in broad historical terms (see *WV* No. 941, 28 August). As conceived by the Communist International at its Third Congress in 1921, the united-front tactic was intended mainly for large Communist parties with a sizable base in the proletariat. It is only under exceptional circumstances, usually where there is a defensive situation and a widely shared sense of urgency, that a small Leninist vanguard can compel larger reformist forces to engage in a united front.

As evidenced by the small turnouts at the 2008 Mumia protests, such circumstances did not exist at the time. In a period already marked by a dearth of class struggle and the rollback of consciousness, the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon were a godsend to the bourgeoisie, reinforcing appeals to chauvinist "national unity" and facilitating the so-called "war on terror"—in reality, a recipe for imperialist plunder abroad and for terrorizing the population domestically, beginning with immigrants, the most vulnerable sector of the working people. Many liberal Mumia supporters had turned tail after Mumia's lead attorney, Leonard Weinglass, was fired from the defense team in March 2001 along with Weinglass' co-counsel, Dan Williams, who had published an unauthorized, lying account of the defense, *Executing Justice*, which aided the courts in suppressing evidence of Mumia's innocence. Then in December 2001, while affirming Mumia's conviction, Judge Yohn overturned the death sentence, undercutting the perceived urgency of the threat to Mumia's life.

That said, our opponents on the left have contributed to the extent of their capacities to politically demobilizing any serious campaign for Mumia's freedom. Rather than insisting on the straightforward point that Mumia is innocent, they do everything to appeal to the liberals, for whom the demand for a new trial is as much about cleaning up the embarrassing unconstitutional "excesses" involved in his blatant frame-up trial as it is about Mumia. At the same time, winning people to the demand to free Mumia in counterposition to the reformists' "new trial" slogan does not in itself lead them to understand that the American state is an instrument of class as well as racial oppression. Yet we acted as though those who agreed with our defense slogans were thereby closer to us programmatically and that a class-struggle defense strategy somehow expressed the totality of our revolutionary-internationalist program.

WV Photo

November 1998: Partisan Defense Committee-initiated rally in Chicago to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolish the racist death penalty.

Correcting Errors

A false perspective that we could "rebuild" a "mass movement" for Mumia Abu-Jamal was related to a false self-criticism central to our last national conference in 2004. The *WV* article reporting on the 2004 conference correctly noted:

> "In the summer of 1995, after a death warrant was signed against him, a powerful movement demanding that Mumia's life be saved erupted across the U.S. and around the world. His scheduled execution was stayed by the courts in August of that year. And while we succeeded in our efforts to galvanize much larger social forces to fight on behalf of Jamal, we recognized that those same forces were far removed from our communist outlook and would inevitably seek to marginalize our involvement in this struggle."
>
> —*WV* No. 841, 4 February 2005

But the article went on to wrongly charge that this correct recognition "became a rationale for increasingly withdrawing from political combat with groups such as Socialist Action and the Workers World Party who tailored their appeals to liberals who were agnostic on Mumia's innocence and thus would not rally around a call to free him.... Our disengaging from political combat with these forces meant we were not as effective as we could have been in exposing their demobilization of support for Mumia."

Far from "disengaging from political combat" after 1995, we continued to expose the state frame-up in our press and to polemicize against the illusions in the "justice" of the capitalist state that our opponents embody in all their activities. While the *WV* article presented an accurate picture of the thinking at that conference, it was wrong. In August 1995, the SL/U.S. Political Bureau motion had determined:

> "The PDC's involvement in Jamal's legal defense should not cloud a clear assessment of our diminishing role in the case. Larger forces have finally come on board and they seek to silence our revolutionary views. We will continue our propaganda and agitation around this case as the cutting edge of the fight against racist capitalist oppression, among minorities, and in the labor and youth arenas where our party will be built."

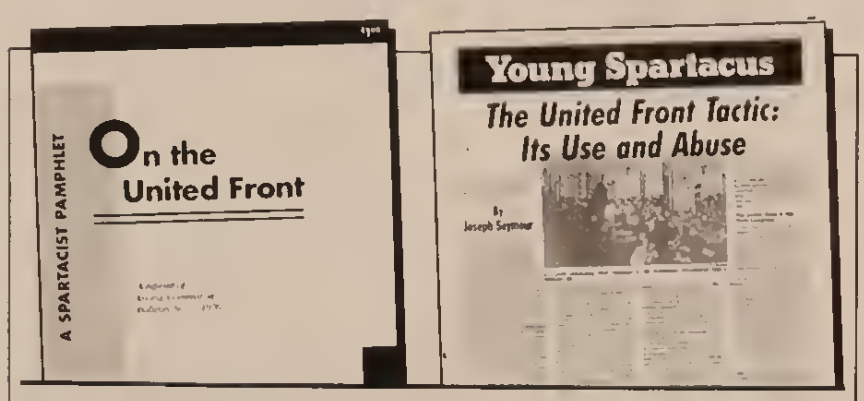
Having larger forces take up the case flowed from the recognition that we are a tiny communist propaganda group lacking the social weight needed to build a class-struggle movement to defend Mumia. Nonetheless, the party and PDC threw massive resources into assisting with Mumia's legal defense. Every professed defender of Mumia today is forced to rely on one or another aspect of the work done by attorneys for the Partisan Defense Committee who also worked on Mumia's case in the mid to late 1990s. From the ballistics evidence to the state's coercion of witnesses to the numerous constitutional violations, virtually every legal argument that Mumia's defenders raise is based on the tremendous work of investigation and legal argumentation advanced by PDC attorneys and publicized by the PDC and SL. And, as our recent conference reaffirmed: we will continue to fight for his freedom "in the framework of our real capacity with our propaganda and tasks adjusted accordingly," which means "investing our resources in accordance with the ebbs and flows of Mumia's case and with the activities of the party as a whole."

For us the fight for Mumia's freedom is part of the struggle to do away with a social system based on vicious class exploitation, all-sided oppression and state terror. But in seeking to "revitalize" a single-issue "movement," our purpose began to shift in a revisionist direction, in the vein of the German arch-reformist, Eduard Bernstein. In continuing to defend the political methodology that led to this shift, our party minority, as a leading comrade noted, advanced a species of neo-Bernsteinism. As Lenin wrote in "Marxism and Revisionism" (1908):

> "A natural complement to the economic and political tendencies of revisionism was its attitude to the ultimate aim of the socialist movement. 'The movement is everything, the ultimate aim is nothing'—this catch-phrase of Bernstein's expresses the substance of revisionism better than many long disquisitions. To determine its conduct from case to case, to adapt itself to the events of the day and to the chopping and changing of petty politics, to forget the primary interests of the proletariat and the basic features of the whole capitalist system, of all capitalist evolution, to sacrifice these primary interests for the real or assumed advantages of the moment—such is the policy of revisionism. And it patently follows from the very nature of this policy that it may assume an infinite variety of forms, and that every more or less 'new' question, every more or less unexpected and unforeseen turn of events, even though it change the basic line of development only to an insignificant degree and only for the briefest period, will always inevitably give rise to one variety of revisionism or another."

In another example of trying to find some kind of original sin that, once corrected, would prevent future problems, the 2004 National Conference also embraced an argument that we had never had an evaluation of our intervention in the DDR and that a lack of evaluation was a root of problems in the party. The *WV* article on the 2004 conference stated that "the ICL failed to conduct a synthetic assessment of either our intervention in the DDR or the work of Moscow station. The failure to critically evaluate these interventions helped set a pattern over the next period that major party interventions did not have to face real scrutiny inside the organization." Politically wrong and factually absurd, this statement was re-examined as part of wide-ranging discussions in the ICL on our DDR intervention.

Beginning immediately after our DDR intervention and continuing through to the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, we engaged in an intensive internal discussion to arrive not only at a synthetic evaluation of our work but also at an analysis of the terminal collapse of Stalinism. The undoing of the



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October Revolution was an unprecedented event in history which posed new questions that Marxists had to answer. These events powerfully confirmed the essential analysis and program of Trotskyism with respect to the USSR. Only months after the defeat in the DDR, the International Executive Committee agreed to publish in our international journal, *Spartacist* ([English-language edition] No. 45-46, Winter 1990-91), the two most politically comprehensive documents issuing out of that discussion, "On the Collapse of Stalinist Rule in East Europe" by Joseph Seymour and "For Marxist Clarity and a Forward Perspective" by Albert St John. These documents were only the tip of the iceberg of our internal discussions in 1990 and were part of an eight-part bulletin series, "Documents and Discussion on the Collapse of Stalinism." Those discussions served as preparation for undertaking an organized presence in the USSR.

In 1992, we published in *Spartacist* (English-language edition) No. 47-48 (Winter 1992-93) the main resolution adopted at the Second ICL Conference that year: "For the Communism of Lenin and Trotsky!" That conference determined that the Soviet Union had been destroyed, a world-historic defeat for the proletariat. The detailed evaluation of our intervention in the DDR made in that document drew the fundamental conclusion that "from the beginning we were in a political struggle with the abdicating Stalinist regime.... Although shaped by the disproportion of forces, there was in fact a contest between the ICL program of political revolution and the Stalinist program of capitulation and counterrevolution."

To the limits of our modest resources, the ICL sought to intervene where we were able on the basis of the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense and proletarian political revolution, which we called for unceasingly in our press. The fact that we already had a German section made it possible for us to intervene heavily in the DDR after the opening of the Berlin Wall. We fought against capitalist reunification and for "a red Germany of workers councils" through socialist revolution in West Germany and political revolution in the DDR. But our efforts were overtaken by the Gorbachev-led bureaucracy in the Kremlin, aided and abetted by the abdicating East German Stalinists, which handed the country over to the revanchist forces of German imperialism.

Some Concrete Programmatic Issues

Much of the work of the recent conference involved concrete tasks of propaganda and other essential political work. Our continuing internal educational series devoted to examining the evolution of the black question and the labor movement in this country from the colonial period onward has been reflected in *WV* through the publication of some of the presentations. Additionally, letters by comrades and other readers concerning the Civil War have also been published in recent issues. A discussion over the ahistorical question, "Was Abraham Lincoln a racist?" underscored the dangers of looking at history through a lens of contemporary "political correctness." The conference document favorably cited a document by a comrade published in *WV* No. 938 (5 June) that observed: "The American Civil War was a bourgeois revolution, and Lincoln was both bourgeois and revolutionary at the same time —with all the contradictions this implies." The comrade continued: "The impulse to denounce Lincoln and to minimize his monumental role in history denies that political people—even great ones—are constrained by objective reality."

The conference deliberations included commissions constituted to discuss and report to the conference on the work of the Labor Black Leagues, which are fraternally associated with the SL, and on work in the trade-union movement, as well as a working meeting which discussed the vast increase in black and Latino incarceration. The conference reaffirmed recent line articles in *WV* on reactionary anti-immigrant strikes and on the Employee Free Choice Act (see "Why Marxists Support the EFCA," *WV* No. 929, 30 January, and "The IG and National Association of Manufacturers Oppose the EFCA," *WV* No. 935, 24 April). While warning the workers against any reliance on any government-prescribed mechanisms of class collaboration, we would support the EFCA in its original form because the card-check provision would make it somewhat easier to organize unions—which is precisely why Democratic Party politicians have recently called this provision into question. The conference document noted that "we cannot always choose the conditions under which we conduct struggle; hence, we oppose arbitration but sometimes workers are compelled to resort to it as a means to defend their interests against the class enemy. This approach to arbitration parallels the SWP's, as reflected in their 1940 draft resolution on the trade-union movement."

The document noted that, in response to the economic crisis, "There is great popular anger directed at the banks but this does not necessarily take a leftward direction. We are confronting increased economic nationalism, including protectionism and a rise in anti-immigrant chauvinism: the reactionary construction worker strikes in Britain are an ugly warning of how this is infecting the organized labor movement." The ICL has been virtually unique on the left in forthrightly opposing these strikes, which have been directed against the hiring of Italian and other foreign workers. A conference motion emphasized the general point on "outsourcing" from a recent *WV* article: "The way to undercut attempts by the bosses to 'level down' the wages and working conditions, including safety standards, of all workers, by playing off one nationality against the other, is for the unions to demand: *Full union pay for all work at the prevailing rate, no matter who does the job! Equal pay for equal work!*" ("Down With Reactionary Strikes Against Foreign Workers!" *WV* No. 930, 13 February).

The conference motion underlined:

> "Our approach to the bosses' outsourcing of jobs to other capitalist countries is not fundamentally different from our approach to outsourcing jobs within the workplace. Marxists fight for industrial unions and to 'organize the unorganized' in the struggle to build unions as *inclusive* organizations of class struggle, not job trusts for shrinking pockets of better-paid workers."

The main conference document noted the renewed popularity of Keynesianism as a supposed solution to the financial crises which are endemic to capitalism. In the immediate aftermath of the onset of the global recession, spokesmen across the bourgeois spectrum embraced fiscal policy based on increased deficit spending, bailouts of bankrupt corporations and partial nationalizations of banks, and greater government intervention and regulation of the economy. But contrary to the impressions given by much of the liberal and reformist press, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal did not put an end to the Depression; what got the U.S. out of the Depression was military spending and production for World War II (see Spartacist pamphlet, *Capitalist Anarchy and the Immiseration of the Working Class*, May 2009).

The conference document sharply contrasted our party's position on the current economic difficulties of U.S. imperialism with that of many of our opponents on the left who call for the capitalist state under the Democratic Party administration to come up with a version of the bailout schemes that will "serve the people" rather than the giant capitalist concerns:

> "Obama's bailout of Wall St. is a massive financial redistribution to banks, insurance companies and hedge funds, which we oppose. We also oppose the protectionist bailout of the auto industry bosses, which *necessarily* comes at the expense of the working class: contracts in the auto industry are already being torn up.... Some comrades and sympathizers objected to our line on the UAW bailout as being 'defeatist,' wanting us to raise more immediate trade-union solutions. But there is no simple answer in the framework of trade-union militancy right now. Our task is to demonstrate that the capitalist system is inherently irrational and must be replaced through workers revolution with a planned socialist economy. We have raised appropriate transitional demands in a *propagandistic* fashion, keeping in mind that an emphasis on agitation in the period of the onset of an economic crisis, when the workers are numbed by mass layoffs, would be disoriented and fake."

Though recognizing that there are important differences between the current period and that of the Great Depression, the conference document emphasized that Trotsky's Transitional Program ("The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," 1938) is of great relevance today. The purpose of the Transitional Program, including such demands as the call for a shorter workweek at no loss in pay to spread the available work, is to bridge the gap between existing consciousness and the communist program. As Trotsky emphasized:

> "'Realizability' or 'unrealizability' is in the given instance a question of the relationship of forces, which can be decided only by the struggle. By means of this struggle, no matter what its immediate practical successes may be, the workers will best come to understand the necessity of liquidating capitalist slavery."

Factional Struggle and Revolutionary Continuity

The National Conference was conducted according to democratic-centralist norms as set forth in our party's Organizational Rules and Guidelines. It was preceded by a three-month period of organized internal discussion. The internal discussion bulletins were open to contributions by all members of the SL/U.S. and, as appropriate and with the approval of the Political Bureau, by members of the Spartacus Youth Clubs and the Labor Black Leagues. Some of the differences expressed in this discussion eventually coalesced into the two factions defending counterposed documents. On the basis of the votes for and against these two documents, a majority and minority were defined and delegates were elected on

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German Historical Museum

Militärverlag DDR

Left: German Social-Democratic leader Eduard Bernstein, prominent proponent of reformism. In her classic 1899 polemic against Bernstein, *Reform or Revolution*, revolutionary Marxist Rosa Luxemburg underlined, "It is quite natural for people who run after immediate 'practical' results to want to... render their practice independent of our 'theory'"—i.e., "the principles of scientific socialism."

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Vaccine...

(continued from page 1)

the mandatory vaccination, falsely claiming that this posed a threat to individual rights and that vaccines are dangerous.

The reality is that the influenza virus, which has a very rapid rate of mutation, poses a real threat to the life and well-being of people all over the world. During the 1918-19 worldwide flu pandemic, some *50 million* people lost their lives. In the U.S. alone, about 36,000 die every year from the seasonal flu.

Unlike seasonal influenza, against which many people have some immunity, H1N1 is a relatively new virus to which most people have never been exposed, meaning most have little to no immunity. While healthy children and young adults are at risk, the virus is especially dangerous to pregnant women, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems or underlying disease conditions such as diabetes, asthma and heart and lung disease. Although the mortality rate of the H1N1 virus is thus far rather low, the virus has the potential to become far more lethal.

Priority of vaccination was set for these vulnerable sections of the population. But what is needed is production of ample amounts of vaccine to inoculate enough of the population to produce what public health professionals call "herd immunity." The higher the proportion of immune individuals, the lower is the likelihood of the spread of disease. However, no H1N1 flu vaccine was available until the first week of October. Of the 195 million doses needed in the U.S. to effectively combat the H1N1 flu, only 51 million doses were available by the fourth week of November—this is in addition to substantial shortages of the seasonal flu vaccine. There have been cases of people lying about their age and women faking pregnancy in order to get vaccinated.

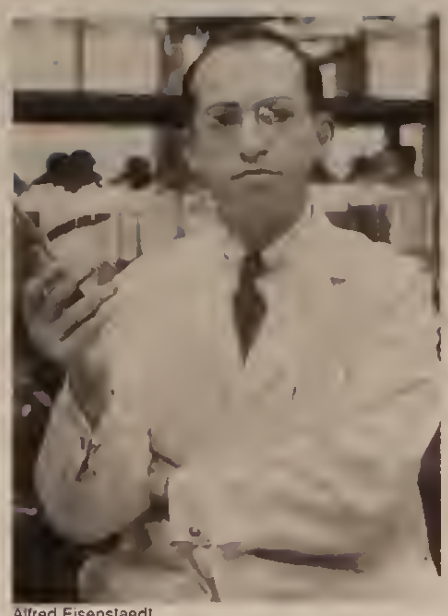
Under capitalism, medicine is driven by profit, not by the needs of society. Because vaccine production is not highly profitable, pharmaceutical companies are loath to invest in it. In 1967, there were 26 companies producing vaccines in the U.S. Today there are only four. Rather than investing in more efficient technology with a faster vaccine yield, these companies continue to use the same antiquated, low-yield technology that was used 50 years ago. Moreover, because many health insurance companies refuse to cover the cost of vaccinations, many pediatricians refer children to hospitals for immunization. At the same time, health delivery services are continually being slashed through budget cuts, layoffs of public health care workers and the closures of hospitals and clinics.

While research into vaccine development receives funding with an eyedropper, the U.S. imperialist ruling class pumps billions into germ warfare research and into fighting "bioterrorism," which has been hyped up as part of the rulers' reactionary "war on terror." As journalist Arthur Allen wrote in his 2008 book, *Vaccine: The Controversial Story of Medicine's Greatest Lifesaver*:

> "No price was too high to pay for anything that had the magic word 'terrorism' attached to it. Congress was willing to authorize $1.9 billion to build and maintain a stockpile of smallpox vaccine, and $1.4 billion to create and stockpile a new anthrax vaccine. From 2002 to 2006 it spent $33 billion on biodefense. Yet in 2003, the NIH [National Institute of Health] invested less than $70 million on influenza vaccine research."

Under capitalism, while providing quality medical care for everyone is within the bounds of material possibility, the availability and quality of health care for working people are subordinate to the drive for profit, with health care rationed by class, race and sex. In New York City, vaccines were diverted from those in hospitals and schools who need them most in order to secure the health of the wealthy bankers of Goldman Sachs and Citigroup.

We stand for free, quality health care for all, including full access to abortion and contraception. We fight for socialized medicine—the expropriation of the parasitic health care and drug companies, which are an immediate threat to the well-being of just about everyone in this country. Our aim is the mobilization of the working class in a fight for these and other such demands as part of the struggle for socialist revolution against the decrepit capitalist order. A rational, internationally planned socialist economy would devote the resources necessary to ensure that the population receives vaccinations and quality medical treatment in a timely manner. Massive resources would be invested in scientific research, to the benefit of the whole of society.



Alfred Eisenstaedt

AP

Pioneering virologist Jonas Salk (left) did not patent his polio vaccine, making it available to everyone. Above: Child is vaccinated following polio outbreak in Nigeria, 2008.

Mysticism and the Anti-Vaccine Hysteria

Although medical science is far from being able to treat all diseases, it has made it possible to control, through vaccination, many of the infectious diseases that were hideous scourges in past centuries. Until vaccines were introduced to stop them, diseases like measles, polio, diphtheria and mumps rolled viciously around the globe. Before it was eradicated, smallpox threatened 60 percent of the world's population, killed every fourth victim (some 500 million in the 20th century alone), scarred or blinded most survivors and eluded any form of treatment. In the U.S., the polio epidemic of 1952 infected some 58,000 people and killed more than 3,000, leaving behind a legacy of terror and paralysis. Until 1963, four million people contracted measles annually; hundreds died each year and thousands were disabled for life by measles encephalitis.

Vaccines have saved the lives of countless millions across the world. Such "miraculous" advances, achieved through science-based medicine, are a refutation of the basic tenets of the anti-vaccine movement, which is based on a reactionary and superstitious ideology. With their hostility to immunization, the anti-vaccine evangelists—groups such as Generation Rescue, Age of Autism, the National Vaccine Information Center and PutChildrenFirst.org—are perfectly willing to let millions of people in poor Third World countries die of preventable diseases. It is the same mentality as that of South African leaders, like former president Thabo Mbeki, who for years had criminally denied that AIDS is caused by a virus, advocating in place of anti-retrovirus medicines natural "remedies" in the form of herbs, vegetables and garlic.

To bolster their argument, anti-vaccine outfits claim that vaccines are ineffective and harmful to the body. They take their religious and anti-scientific cues from turn-of-the-century racists and anti-Semites like the mystic Rudolf Steiner, who established the Waldorf movement, and Reuben Swinbourne Clymer, who was vice president of the Anti-Vaccination Society of America in 1902. As Arthur Allen wrote in *Vaccine*, Steiner viewed "the body as a temple, the blood as a divine fluid, and vaccines as spiritual pollution." He believed that "blond, blue-eyed people were disappearing from the world because they were 'weaker physically and mentally stronger' than 'dark people'."

Clymer's 1957 book, *The Age of Treason*, a bible for medical quacks, is a harangue against vaccination, birth control, food additives, mood-altering drugs and "racial miscegenation": "The enemies of God and mankind...have used or plan to employ inoculations for the purpose of destroying mental balance and making it impossible for the minds of children to develop beyond a more or less moronic or robot degree." He put the blame of these "ills" on "militant socialists and the enemies of God and Man, many of whom are admittedly Jews."

Anti-vaccine fanatics cite anecdotal evidence to falsely link vaccines to autism. They claim that vaccines are damaging to the immune system and that thimerosal, a mercury derivative that had been used as a preservative in multi-dose vials of vaccines, is the cause of brain damage in autistic children. The symptoms of autism, believed by many scientists to be a genetic disorder, become evident around the age of two years, which happens to be the same age children receive multiple vaccines. Credible scientific studies in several countries, involving hundreds of thousands of children, have found no link between vaccines or thimerosal and autism. Unvaccinated children developed autism at the same rate as the vaccinated, and the prevalence of autism remained the same after thimerosal was removed from vaccines in 2001.

The myth of vaccines' link to autism is trumpeted by politicians of both capitalist parties, from Republican Congressman Dan Burton, an adamant supporter of "alternative medicine" quackery, to Democratic Senator John Kerry and Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Contributing to the crusade, the media has provided the anti-vaccine fanatics with forums to spew their poison. They want to create a "debate" where none exists, much like their promotion of proponents of "intelligent design" mysticism. Generation Rescue spokespersons Jenny McCarthy, whose son suffers from autism, and her boyfriend Jim Carrey, as well as National Vaccine Information Center president Barbara Loe Fisher have become fixtures on talk shows, from Oprah Winfrey to Don Imus and Larry King. Meanwhile, the influential *Huffington Post* Web site has become a repository of all kinds of medical quackery. To her credit, actress Amanda Peet has stepped forward in defense of childhood vaccinations, declaring, "I was shocked at the amount of misinformation floating around, particularly in Hollywood."

Science as a Candle in the Dark

Apart from minor reactions, vaccines are quite safe. They are certainly never as dangerous as the highly contagious diseases that they prevent (and contrary to popular myth, flu vaccines do not cause the flu). There could be no better proof of the effectiveness of vaccines than the fact that many ruthless killers like diphtheria and the measles are rare and, in many cases, unknown to young parents.

Ironically, the virtual disappearance of such diseases has given the anti-vaccine zealots ammunition to prey on ignorance, falsely claiming that infectious diseases are not deadly and that vaccines pose a threat. Meanwhile, some 20 states have religious exemptions to childhood vaccinations. Ominously, because of declining rates of childhood vaccinations, many dangerous diseases are making a comeback. For example, the number of reported cases of pertussis (whooping cough)—a highly contagious bacterial disease that can be lethal to infants—jumped from 1,000 in 1976 to 26,000 in 2004, while there have been a number of fatal cases of meningitis in unvaccinated children in Pennsylvania and Minnesota.

Many today do not remember the scientists who developed life-saving vaccines. In the 1950s, when polio was wreaking havoc, Dr. Jonas Salk, the pioneering virologist who developed the first safe and effective vaccine against it, was rightly hailed as a hero and his name became a familiar household word. The grateful citizens of Winnipeg, a site of a major polio epidemic in 1953, sent him a 208-foot telegram with more than 7,000 signatures. Salk did not patent his vaccine, believing it should be available for everybody. When asked who held the patent, he replied, "Well, the people.... There is no patent. Could you patent the sun?" Salk was never awarded a Nobel Prize for his

This pamphlet reprints presentations given by SL Central Committee member Joseph Seymour on the origins of Marxism in the French Enlightenment and in left Hegelianism. Also included are "150 Years of the Communist Manifesto" and "Marxism and Religion."

In the retrograde climate of post-Soviet reaction, the struggle to reassert the validity of the program and purpose of revolutionary Marxism is crucial for our fight for new October Revolutions.

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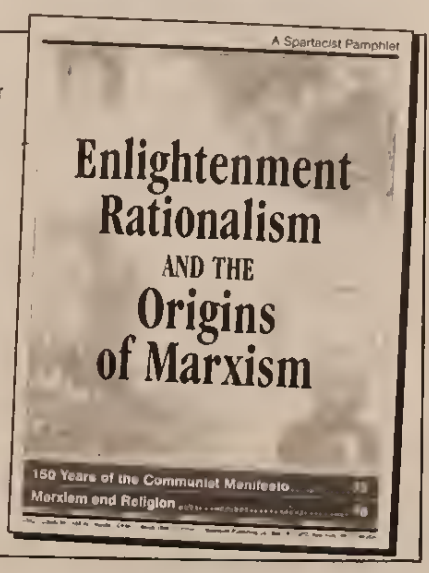
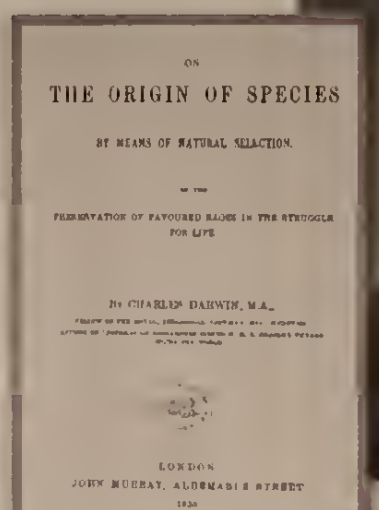
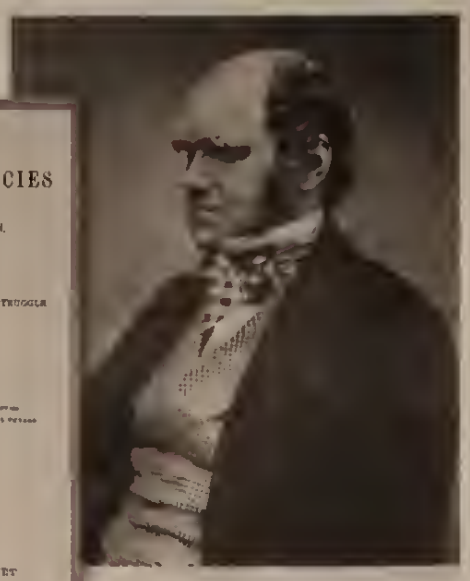


"There Is Grandeur in this View of Life"

November 24 marked the 150th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's On the Origin of Species. *This seminal work outlined Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection, which forms the basis of modern biology. We print below the final paragraph of* On the Origin of Species, *as published in the first, 1859, edition. Of note, in subsequent editions of the book the words "by the Creator" were added after the phrase "having been originally breathed," most likely due to pressure from religious "public opinion."*

It is interesting to contemplate an entangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent upon each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the external conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for Life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.


ON
THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES
BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION.
PRESERVATION OF FAVOURED RACES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE.
By CHARLES DARWIN, M.A.
LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET


Charles Darwin (ca-1854)

Maull and Fox

scientific breakthrough. But for his idealistic humanism, the FBI kept a file on him. Today, with most of these deadly diseases a distant memory, scientists like Dr. Paul Offit, an ardent defender of vaccines and co-inventor of a vaccine against rotavirus, a diarrheal disease that kills 600,000 children worldwide every year, have been targets of scurrilous attacks and death threats by opponents of vaccines.

Helping drive the anti-vaccine campaign are homeopaths, acupuncturists, chiropractors and other quacks who are opposed to science-based medicine. On its Web site, the International Chiropractors Association promotes a tract titled *Vaccination: 100 Years of Orthodox Research Shows that Vaccines Represent a Medical Assault on the Immune System.* According to Arthur Allen, when in the early 1990s the National Vaccine Information Center (then called Dissatisfied Parents Together) was about to go bankrupt, it was saved by a large donation from a chiropractors' organization. What makes these quacks more dangerous is that they are at times more accessible than costly health care and are increasingly covered by insurance companies because they are much cheaper than real doctors. Sadly, these snake oil salesmen have become a source of "treatment" for a wide section of the population.

In its irrationality, fear mongering and anti-scientific backwardness, the hysteria against vaccines is reminiscent of the 1950s' campaign against the fluoridation of public water, a measure to prevent tooth decay that was depicted as a Communist plot to control the mind and sap and pollute the "precious bodily fluids" of the population. Dr. Stephen Barrett of Quackwatch.org notes that "chiropractors have been in the forefront of political battles against fluoridation." (Perhaps they think that tooth decay is susceptible to spinal manipulation!)

In the U.S., religion, promoted and embraced by whole sections of the bourgeoisie, supplies an ideology that attempts to harmonize conflicting class interests while keeping society firmly ordered: capital above labor, white above black, man above woman. It provides the breeding ground for backward anti-scientific ideologies, including creationism, which challenges the established facts of Darwinian natural selection as the motor force for evolution. Some 46 percent of Americans believe in the Biblical creation myth, while 79 percent believe in angels.

The rise of religiosity and anti-scientific attitudes is aided by the decline of education, especially in basic science, in public schools. The last time that the U.S. ruling class undertook a sustained effort to promote science education was after the Soviet Union launched its Sputnik I satellite in 1957. Fear of a Soviet lead in military technology led President Dwight Eisenhower to demand a billion-dollar program to improve science education and to enact the National Defense Education Act in 1958. Creationism was elbowed aside as the newly formed Biological Science Curriculum Study wrote evolution into new high school textbooks. But for decades, the U.S. has seen a growing tide of ideological reaction that became even more accentuated following the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet degenerated workers state in 1991-92, which gave a major boost to all-around religious delusion.

The backward ideology that feeds the anti-vaccine movement is shared by opponents of abortion and genetically engineered crops. For years, the Catholic church's hierarchy "debated" whether it was sinful to be inoculated with the vaccine against rubella, which was grown on a cell line obtained from an aborted fetus. On the same ideological basis, federal funding for potentially life-saving stem-cell research was banned in the U.S. until very recently. In Britain, Prince Charles, ranting about genetically engineered foods, once stated, "I happen to believe that this kind of genetic modification takes mankind into realms that belong to God, and to God alone." In his opposition to a technology that yields qualitatively better and more abundant crops, this relic of medievalism is willing to starve millions.

AP

Cairo, April 2009: Egyptian Coptic Christian farmers protest Health Ministry's phony anti-flu measure of slaughtering pigs.

Public Health and Individual Rights

Last August, the New York State health commissioner issued a directive mandating vaccination against seasonal and H1N1 flu for all health care workers by the end of November. Several health workers unions—including the New York State Nurses Association, 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East and AFSCME District Council 37—objected to the mandate and some filed suits claiming that the order violated their civil rights. A judge put a halt on the directive, which the state later suspended because of vaccine shortage.

We would be in favor of this mandate—now unfortunately annulled—as a public health measure that would protect those receiving vaccines and prevent the further spread of disease, especially among hospitalized people whose underlying conditions are aggravated by infection. Because herd immunity cannot always be achieved voluntarily, public health measures are sometimes drastic and intrusive, but they are often necessary to achieve that level of immunity and save lives. There are often times when public health and individual rights clash. But getting vaccinated violates no individual rights except the "right" to spread infection. Appropriate measures such as hand washing and the wearing of gloves and masks have been standard mandatory practices in hospitals for decades. Every state already requires health care workers to be immunized against measles, mumps and polio. Quarantines are at times established for those with dangerous infectious diseases. Some of the greatest advances made in health were made through public health measures like clean drinking water, improved hygiene and vaccines.

There is more than plenty to distrust about the capitalist government. But the anti-vaccine hysteria has nothing to do with a "healthy" mistrust of the state. Rather, it is motivated by anti-scientific prejudices.

It is testament to the political bankruptcy of the trade-union bureaucracy that union leaders who have presided over concession after concession to the bosses on health and pension benefits, reopening and extending contracts, are now posturing as defenders of their members' rights by mobilizing them for a reactionary campaign against vaccinations. Instead, the trade-union movement should be demanding that vaccines be made available for all health workers against the preventable diseases to which they are exposed. The unions should be calling for unconditional, unlimited sick leave for all workers at full pay beginning with day one of employment. They should be in the vanguard of the struggle for free health care for everyone, which would help revitalize the labor movement. Such struggles are part of the fight to forge a vanguard party of the proletariat that will strive to combat social backwardness within the workers movement and stand for the primacy of science over superstition.

Where there is a real clash between the principle of individual rights and that of public health, resolution can be achieved only by examining the particular health threat posed. In the early 1980s, as the deadly AIDS epidemic was spreading, public health officials proposed to close gay bathhouses in San Francisco. Our initial reaction was to demand: "Government Out of the Baths!" This was incorrect. The issue was one of *life and death.* You don't cite the First Amendment when the fire department is hacking through your walls to stop a fire. The point of closing the baths was to slow down the already exponential spread of AIDS and alert the gay men who were most at risk. In reconsidering our earlier incorrect position, we wrote in "The Agony of AIDS" (*Women and Revolution* No. 35, Summer 1988):

> "Like everything else in this capitalist society, 'public health' is infused with class, race and sex bias. Early in this century, health officials blamed immigrants and the poor for diseases like syphilis and gonorrhea, which they claimed (falsely) were spread through drinking fountains. But the extraordinary powers granted by law to departments of public health are necessary to fight disease. This fight can often involve quite brutal interference of the state into private life."

Another example of such necessary intrusion occurred in 1967 when the World Health Organization launched a successful campaign to rid humanity of smallpox. For eleven years, health workers, armed with vaccine and bifurcated

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NOTICE

***Workers Vanguard* skips an issue in December. Our next issue, which will close on December 15, will be dated 1 January 2010.**

Conference...

(continued from page 9)

the basis of proportional representation. Another aspect of political preparation was the participation in the written discussion of comrades of other sections of the ICL, leading up to a plenum of the International Executive Committee preceding the SL/U.S. conference.

Factional rights are integral to democratic-centralism and our organizational rules are unique in spelling out those rights. The different factions had the right to circulate their own correspondence among themselves and caucuses met separately in the lead-up to and at the conference. At the same time, our rules are explicit that binding instructions cannot be placed on conference delegates, who must be free to change their views in the course of the discussion. Counterposed conference documents, amended by each caucus, were thus debated and voted on in the final session. The minority decided to forego its right to present a leadership slate counterposed to the slate recommended by the majority caucus. Nonetheless, the minority was integrated into the Central Committee with a weight generously disproportionate to the support for its views in the party as a whole.

In the course of the recent party debates, there was a dispute over whether a prior internal party fight had been "partial." This can be said of almost any factional struggle in the Marxist movement. Revolutionary continuity does not occur seamlessly or in a straight line, but in jagged struggles of trying to apply the program of Marxism to reality. The Socialist Workers Party was for many decades the Trotskyist organization in the U.S. During World War II, an argument began with a grouping that became the Goldman-Morrow faction, which made an empirically correct assertion that illusions in democracy would be increased in West Europe with the re-stabilization of the bourgeois order under the occupation of American troops. The Goldman-Morrow faction had a better grasp of empirical reality, but they were also capitulating to it, writing off the need for a revolutionary working-class program and justifying a concentration on "democratic" demands. While their analysis of the situation was empirically flawed, the SWP majority upheld the correct and essential programmatic conclusions of Trotskyism.

Later, Cannon and the SWP were belated in taking up the fight against Pabloism in the Fourth International. Arguing that objective conditions in the post-World War II world would cause the Stalinist parties to pursue a "roughly" revolutionary course, Michel Pablo and cothinkers in the European Trotskyist movement obviated the need to build a Trotskyist leadership in the struggle for international socialist revolution. These politics were reflected inside the SWP in the Cochran-Clarke fight in 1952-53. That fight was partial and focused on the issues as they were posed on the SWP's national terrain. But despite the limitations, the SWP majority under Cannon crucially *did* take a stand against Pabloite liquidation.

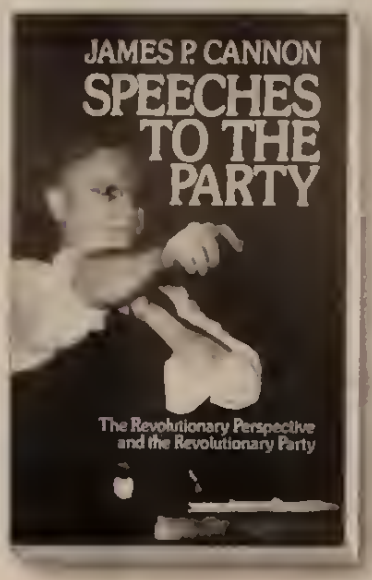
Cannon and the SWP are our revolutionary continuity, carried forward through the factional struggle of our founding cadres as the Revolutionary Tendency inside the SWP. The RT fought against the SWP's reconciliation with the revisionism it had once opposed. Embracing Pabloite tailism of whatever was in motion and was popular, the SWP in the early 1960s politically supported the Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy under the guns of U.S. imperialism, as well as American black nationalists and/or the liberal preachers of the civil rights movement. This centrist degeneration was a short-lived way station to the SWP becoming the reformist "best builders" of the social-patriotic, pro-Democratic Party wing of the antiwar activism thrown up by the losing U.S. imperialist war against Vietnam. Fighting for the victory of the Vietnamese Revolution, despite its Stalinist leadership, the early Spartacist League defended the elementary Leninist understanding that imperialist war is endemic to the capitalist system and can be ended only by socialist revolution.

The recent struggle in our party has been a sign of the ideological pressures of our times. *Every* internal fight tends to have errors, partial understandings and overcorrections; a Marxist evaluation of reality can be achieved only through successive approximations. In the past period we have certainly made errors, which we struggle to understand and correct without demonizing comrades. These have included sectarian errors; however, we have mainly had to struggle against opportunist departures that, if not fought and reversed, undermine our whole revolutionary purpose.

The program of Trotskyism remains the indispensable means for finding a proletarian way forward out of the impasse of capitalism. Without this the crises of capitalism will bring nothing but more mass misery, racist reaction and war. As the Italian comrades' greetings to the conference emphasized:

> "The economic downturn of capitalism and its outcomes—from reactionary strikes in Britain aimed at Italian, Portuguese and other foreign workers; to the ominous growth of racist reaction in Europe; or to the joint efforts of U.S. and Italian capitalists, aided by trade-union bureaucrats and reformists, to save the profits of failing automakers (Chrysler, GM or Fiat) through state funding, massive layoffs and cutbacks—cry out for a class-struggle response based on the program of proletarian revolutionary internationalism embodied by the ICL."

Our experiences of the past period only emphasize the danger of looking for new "get rich quick" schemes as a way out of our current impasse. We may not have an immediate "perspective" but we have plenty of essential tasks, centering on the maintenance of the biweekly *Workers Vanguard* as the chief expression of our propaganda perspective and on cadre education. We must continue to probe for openings, especially in areas of the world where the regression of consciousness is more uneven. But our central task, including and especially in those endeavors, is to arm the party programmatically and theoretically, from *Spartacist* to the maintenance of our Central Committee archive, the Prometheus Research Library, and education of all kinds in the course of our work. More than anything we must continue to patiently fight for the program of authentic Trotskyism and the building of a proletarian vanguard party in the U.S. as a disciplined section of a reforged Fourth International ■



Le Bolchevik

The ICL stands on heritage of James P. Cannon and the SWP's fight to defend Trotskyist program against Pabloite revisionism during 1952-53 Cochran-Clarke fight, documented in *Speeches to the Party*. Right: Ernest Mandel (at microphone) and Michel Pablo in 1988.

Vaccine...

(continued from page 11)

needles, scoured cities and remote villages throughout Africa and Asia for cases and contacts. They broke into houses and vaccinated families against their repeated objections. Nick Ward, a WHO official in Bangladesh, described his team as "a band of vigilantes, about forty-four white, foreign infidels who were not likely to be excessively worried about the finer points of Muslim beliefs.... We nearly lost some of our people, though. Somebody *was* killed with an arrow in India, and another had his head slit open with a cleaver" (quoted in June Goodfield, *Quest for the Killers* [1985]). Time was key to the campaign's success, and in the face of resistance, force was fastest. By 1979, in one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century, the smallpox disease was wiped from the face of the planet.

Public Health and Government Manipulation

Control of disease is as much a social question as a scientific one. Under capitalism, the profits of pharmaceutical and insurance giants come before public health, which is indelibly imprinted with the reactionary bigotry of capitalist society.

In the infamous Tuskegee experiments, 400 Southern black men with syphilis, who were never told they had it, were left untreated for some 40 years and allowed to die so that "researchers" could watch the ravages of the untreated disease as it destroyed their bodies and minds. Right-wing bigot Norman Podhoretz railed against government expenditure on AIDS vaccination research, writing, "Are they aware that in the name of compassion they are giving social sanction to what can only be described as brutish degradation?" To this day, the federal government refuses to fund needle-exchange programs to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among heroin addicts. For several years, conservatives have been waging a war to prevent mandatory vaccination of schoolgirls against human papilloma virus (HPV) because it "promotes promiscuity." HPV is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases and a primary cause of cervical cancer, killing some 5,000 women each year. The vaccine has proven to be exceptionally effective. The right-wing zealots are telling women: practice abstinence or maybe die.

Using the current "swine flu" pandemic as a pretext, governments around the world have manipulated public health measures for their own purposes. Several governments slapped irrational bans on imports of live pigs. In Egypt, the government slaughtered all the country's 300,000 pigs, even though the virus is not spread by pigs. The culling of the hogs was part of the continuing oppression of the Coptic Christian minority, the only group that raises and consumes pigs. In the process, the Egyptian government actually *created* a public health disaster: garbage piled high on the streets of Cairo as the Coptic pig farmers, known as the *zabaleen* (trash people), who collected much of the city's garbage could no longer do their work, because the pigs that devoured the collected organic waste were killed. Meanwhile, in Ukraine, the government has banned public gatherings and rallies for the period leading up to elections in January.

As historical materialists and scientific socialists, we fight for a world socialist revolution to tear the means of production out of the hands of the greedy capitalist class. On an international scale, this would lay the material basis for a communist world free of exploitation and oppression. Then, all the positive gains of modern science can be used to form the basis for a qualitative expansion of scientific research, technological development and production output, which would all be put to the service of humanity. And all the fake science that is used to justify and defend capitalist rule can be rejected. In a 1925 speech, "Dialectical Materialism and Science," Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky stated:

> "For its needs, society requires knowledge of nature. But at the same time, society demands an affirmation of its right to be what it is, a justification of its particular institutions—first and foremost, the institutions of class domination—just as in the past it demanded the justification of serfdom, class privileges, monarchical prerogatives, national exceptionalism, etc. Socialist society accepts with utmost gratitude the heritage of the positive sciences, discarding, as is the right of inventorial choice, everything that is useless in acquiring knowledge of nature but only useful in justifying class inequality and all other kinds of historical untruth." ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

2009 SUBJECT INDEX

Issues No. 927 (2 January) through No. 948 (4 December)

GUIDE TO THE SUBJECT INDEX

- This subject index covers issues of *Workers Vanguard* published during 2009, from issue No. 927 (2 January) through the end-of-the-year issue No. 948 (4 December). During this time, *WV* was published biweekly, except skipping three alternate issues in June, July and August, and skipping the last issue in December.
- The fullest listing is by SUBJECT. Subject headings are arranged alphabetically. Entries are listed chronologically with two exceptions: all entries comprising a series are listed together immediately following the first entry of the series; corrections immediately follow the relevant entry. An asterisk (*) after the page location of an entry indicates that a correction follows.
- Entries are listed under subject heads. In some cases, subject heads are broken down into subcategories. These subcategories are listed immediately after the initial subject head and preceded by a dot (•). The numbers following each entry headline give the issue number, date and page number(s) for the article. Thus:

  Army Bloodbath in Sri Lanka, #930, 13 Feb. (12, 11)

  means the headline of the article, issue No. 930, dated 13 February 2009 beginning on page 12 and continuing on page 11.
- No entry is listed twice; refer to cross-references for guidance in locating the subject head for particular articles. Cross-references are of two types: those following the word "see" deal centrally with the subject head, those following the words "see also" are related articles. Subject heads in cross-references are separated by a semicolon, while subcategories of subject heads are separated by a comma. Thus:

  G20 Protests—See **Civil Liberties: G20 Protests.** See also **Britain.**

  means that articles about G20 protests can be found by going to the subject head **Civil Liberties** and looking under the subcategory **G20 Protests**. Related articles can be found by going to the subject head **Britain**.
- Individuals mentioned in articles are usually not a subject heading unless the article is primarily about the given person. Foreign political organizations are generally cross-referenced to their appropriate countries, while U.S. political organizations are listed under their organizational names.
- Articles relating to foreign countries are listed under geographical headings and not normally under any other subject heading. Articles that deal centrally with U.S. foreign policy will be found under **U.S.: International Relations** or under the relevant geographical heading. For example, articles about the U.S. occupation of Iraq will be found under **IRAQ**.
- Articles under the *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* (CSDN) masthead are by the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal and social defense organization associated with the Spartacist League.
- Abbreviations used in entries are:
  - C: Correction
  - CSDN: *Class-Struggle Defense Notes* article
  - E: Editorial Note
  - L: Letter
  - S: Series
  - R: Review
  - W&R: *Women and Revolution* article
  - YSp: *Young Spartacus* article
- Entries for articles that first appeared in the press of another section of the International Communist League indicate the name of the press in parentheses, for example: (*Le Bolchévik*).

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